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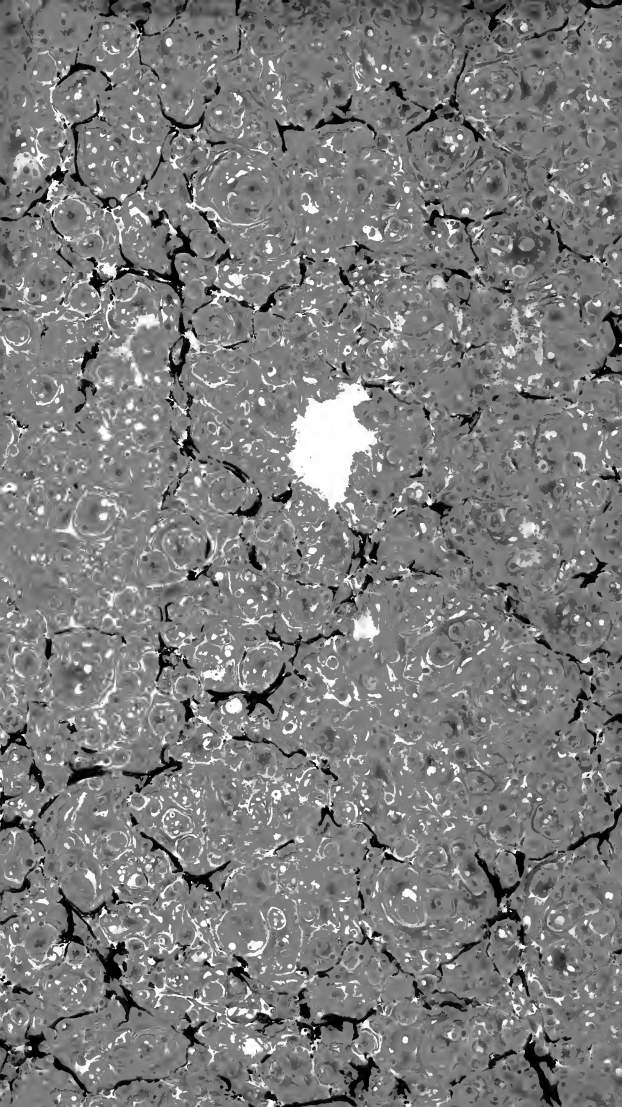

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Sarah Brotherton
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RINGROVE;

OR,

OLD FASHIONED NOTIONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN," "A TALE OF THE TIMES," &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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RINGROVE.

CHAP. X.

I HAD not slept while Ellen was reading. All my gentlewomanly melancholy and contempt for a country life did not make me wish to glide immediately into the vale of years; and I considered with some complacency that many lustres would intervene for preparation before I should be called to assume the character of an old woman. When the time should come, I thought that of Erminia would be the best I had heard of, and preferable to my grandmother's, insomuch that Erminia was still a woman of the world,

gave routs, lived in London, saw good company, and of course had a large fortune. But how she could endure such a man as Probus, at least how she could be happy with him, and consider him as having improved her own character, was to me astonishing.

A new reflection crossed me. From the turn of my grandmother's conversation, especially from some hints that even Mrs. Goodenough had not been very happy in her marriage, I began to consider the possibility of getting plenty of money, so as to set up an establishment of my own, and enjoy life without the control of a husband. It occurred to me to try the lottery. Two tickets might, as the newspapers asserted, procure me forty thousand pounds, and they might be bought for less than forty. Suppose they only brought thirty

thousand; forty thousand would be much better, but thirty thousand would do, or twenty thousand, or ten thousand. That would be very bad luck; but then I could live with my grandmamma, and save money and buy tickets till I got forty thousand; for I feared that a less sum would not allow me to live as I liked.

Raising the first forty pounds seemed to one who was not mistress of as many shillings the chief difficulty. I had asked my father for money just when his parting tear wetted my cheek. He told me to be a good girl, and apply for funds to my grandmother till he sent me a remittance, as money was just then scarce with him. I had now been four months in the country, and I calculated, from my former allowances, that I should soon receive fifty pounds. I wanted

little in the article of clothes: any thing did for the people I mixed with: ten pounds would serve for gloves, shoes, and ribands; and the other forty should be put in the lottery. I have faithfully recorded these estimates, as they form the first arithmetical calculation in which I was ever engaged.

My grandmother and Ellen came late next morning to breakfast, and with evident marks of indisposition or depression. A sleepless night, headache, and the agitation caused by being called out of bed, accounted for their altered appearance. As soon as we were alone, my grandmother told me that my father's head clerk had called on her and brought her a letter.

"No letter or packet for me?"

"Your father is now particularly occupied, and has not leisure to write."

I burst into an agony of grief, and

exclaimed, "He has never fulfilled the promises he made me when I left him. Is he well?"

"He does not mention his health," replied she, "and I always infer the best from silence; but what were these promises, Emma? Why fear confiding your perplexities to me?"

"He promised, madam, to send me a remittance."

"Well, his promise will be attended to." She drew from her pocket book a five-pound note, and put it into my hands. Not Alnaschar, when he kicked down his basket of crockery ware, the germ of his fortunes, could look more blank at seeing the vizier's daughter, and his slaves and his palaces vanish, than I looked when she said, "You will receive a similar sum every quarter day, punctually paid; and we hope that

with good contrivance, notability, and residence in the country, Emma——"

"'Tis not equal to his house-maid's wages and perquisites," said I, indignantly. "I wonder my father can treat me in this manner."

"Perhaps, Emma, it would be imprudent in him to allow you a larger sum."

"O, madam, pardon me; I know poverty cannot be the reason." I flung my arms round her neck, and sobbing on her bosom, said, "Before he married Mrs. Herbert, he has laid out as much upon me in toys. No, that woman is the reason of my being cast off; I should have been a much better as well as a happier girl if I had never lost my own dear mamma."

My grandmother's sobs responded to mine. "Dear child, we will go no further into this painful subject. Re-

member that her removal was the will of God, and that I am her mother and your protectress; and as for pecuniary affairs, believe me, with the habits you will now acquire, you will find this allowance enough to be comfortable."

"Comfortable! rich," said Ellen, folding mine in her kind hands. "It is more than I can spend upon myself, without being loaded with superfluities."

I was not so ungrateful as to refrain from returning these caresses, or so insensible as not to feel this soothing kindness; yet my sense of the cruelty of my father's conduct urged me to say, that I was treated more like a brute animal than a human being; fostered in my childhood with the tenderest care, and then deserted; nay, treated worse than a brute; for I was habituated to wants that my own ex-

ertions could not supply. My grandmother suggested that there might be reasons for this stinted allowance; — my father's affairs might have become less prosperous. I spurned the idea, and still insisted that the machinations of my mother-in-law had alienated his affections, driven me from his home, and now deprived me of my just claims on his fortune.

"At least," said my grandmother, "if your residence at Ringrove was promoted by her, she has shown a thoughtful solicitude for your happiness, by placing you where you might secure the affection of your nearest relatives; and the plan has succeeded. I see in the representative of my beloved daughter much to admire, much that endears her to me on her own account, not to mention the solemn voice which I hear continually

calling upon me from the grave, and urging me, if I truly love the child, not to spare her foibles."

I kissed away the tears which stole down the cheek of the venerable speaker, and put the five-pound note into my nearly exhausted purse with conflicting feelings. The sums that I had formerly seen there haunted my memory like reproachful spectres, accusing me of thoughtless waste and selfish appropriation. Ellen always appeared genteelly though not expensively attired, and I knew that she supported some little village charities in which her own labour eked out her scanted donation. A habit of turning every thing to some useful purpose, and the ambition of being esteemed the best contriver and cutter-out of the village, caused her assistance to be sought by persons of different degrees;

and as there were none who did not confess how well Miss Loveday's attire became her, and admire the good air of her bonnets, she was enabled, by folding a turban or disposing a rosette, to confer an obligation on her equals, and also to make her inferiors happy, by converting the gleanings of several wardrobes into Sunday bonnets and tippets for their children. This kept Ellen always busy, and, need I add? always happy. Occupied in contriving for the comforts of others, she really had no time to indulge in painful retrospects or in sad anticipations. I thought I would try to be like her, if there should be no chance of my ever returning to that world from which I had, with sighs of reluctance, withdrawn. A deep reverie succeeded our conversation; all seemed disinclined to talk, being infested perhaps by the

gloominess of the morning, which was too wet for a drive. The piano was out of tune; and I had used up all Ellen's water-colours in painting a set of chimney ornaments which were too large for their destined situation. I was indisposed for fancy-work. What could I do to kill time?

"Thinking of unavoidable evils," said my grandmother, starting from what seemed an anxious meditation, "only unnerves our minds when they require a stimulant. I see we shall be bad company this morning, Ellen: be kind enough to re-introduce us to Mrs. Macmendus; I hope we shall not exhaust her stores, before our spirits are sufficiently re-invigorated to enable us to depend on our own resources." My grandmother handed the manuscript to Ellen, who read the essay which she selected.

" *The Improver.*

" ' See how the world its veterans rewards!
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards;
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
Young without lovers, old without a friend.'

POPE.

" I am just returned from visiting an old acquaintance, whom I shall distinguish by the name of Sally Scanty: we were schoolfellows, and Sally, whenever we stood up to dance, was generally my partner. I think I now see her before me, in a hanging-sleeve-coat, made of the flounce of her mother's wedding suit of clothes, with worked catgut bib and apron, and a yellow pompoon in her Dresden worked cap, looking excessively genteel in her own eyes, and also in mine; for she was an attorney's daughter, and I was sometimes invited to take tea with her in Red Lion Square, from whence I

failed not to transport some accomplishment to embellish the less pure atmosphere of Cannon Street. I remember once objecting to mend my father's stockings, Miss Scanty having told me it was vulgar work; and this refinement of ideas proved the termination of our acquaintance; for, alarmed at the apprehension of my being corrupted, my mother sent me to another school.

"I lost sight of Miss Scanty till a short time since, when I recognised her at a pastry-cook's, cramming penny buns into a reticule, made of the identical hanging-sleeve-coat which had excited my youthful admiration. Her figure was shrunk and faded, but still her appearance indicated the same desire of being excessively genteel: I cannot however say, that her Leno pelisse lined with lemon-coloured ca-

lico, and her Spanish hat and plume drooping over a sun-burnt tête, excited the same awful sensation of superiority which I used to experience from the display of her marcasite cross, and paste shoe-buckles, in our dancing days; and I reflected that age acquires a habit of regarding the individual as if separated from those adventitious ornaments with which it is in youth combined, and that a jaunty air on the verge of seventy is at best ridiculous. Miss Scanty's lodgings, I found, were near mine: we walked home together, and by the way, in the language of the Female Quixote, we related our adventures. My history was soon told, for I said nothing of Lady Allestree's friendship, and very little of my good doctor; but my companion's narrative had enough of extraordinary incidents for a novel, — such were the persecu-

tions which she had suffered from the other sex, and the envy she excited in her own. She was so polite as to insist upon accompanying me home, said something civil about the good air of every thing about me, and, on my remark that I was now such an attached home-dweller as rarely to go out, she pressed for an exemption of the rule in favour of an old friend whose parties were untainted by vulgar company and free from disgusting expence. She then presented me with a card, observing, that she indulged a whim in her present residence at a baker's on a second floor in a back street, if there could be any whim in being fond of quiet, pure air, agreeable smells, and unadulterated food; which her excellent friend, Lady Dawdle, told her at Weymouth (where she spent the

summer) were the four cardinal points of happiness.

"In my subsequent intercourse with Miss Scanty, I discovered her real history, and was tempted to smile at the happy alchemy of her imagination, which could convert privations into privileges, interpret a sarcasm into compliment, and transform humorists into lovers; but my astonishment gave place to dislike, on perceiving that, instead of a visionary, she was an impostor labouring to deceive my good faith, not a dupe to her own credulity. I found that she keenly felt the rubs of a rough world, through which, to own the truth, her path had been irksome, and that she could only support her own mortifications by fancying that they escaped discovery. Her narrow fortune might have supplied a routine of bare comforts; but

by dividing her time into two seasons, — one of smart appearance, and the other of pining seclusion, — and by allowing three-fourths of the year to the latter privation, she was enabled occasionally to emerge into a second-rate world, and to refresh her withering hopes of conquest by visits to watering-places. There she affected to extol the kindness of friends detaining her in the country, the gallantry of gentlemen, and the assiduities of relations; talking thus to girls gathered into groups to laugh at her, while dowagers were hurrying to cut in, lest she should intrude on their set. Yet there Sally, by disguising her chagrin, learns the mode and the talk of the day, which she afterwards retails to an inferior set, who regard her as their oracle, and credit her figments of rejected aldermen and sighing bankers, though

possibly they are a little surprised at their taste and her cruelty; for her positive assurance does not thoroughly convince them that her lodgings are what people of fashion would prefer to the bustle of trade, that weak tea and vegetable diet are more salubrious than a generous regimen, or that the flimsy remnants of an exhausted wardrobe are more consistent with the costume of ladies of high fashion than the garniture of a Bond-street milliner, however degraded by adoption among the city dames.

" In my old schoolfellow may be recognised one of the numerous instances that prove the absurdity of teaching women to found their consequence, not on those habits which may induce a laudable degree of self-esteem, but on a certain adroitness in catching the prevailing mode, which,

unless the imitators be so felicitously situated as to copy from correct models, I hold to be the bane of respectability and consistency. Miss Scanty's acquaintance were just refined enough to despise the useful activity of the plain housewife, and the rough plenty which generally rewards her exertions; to affect languor as a lady-like distinction; and, by eternally descanting on the all-sufficiency of high life, and the attention of beaux, to induce the youthful tyros around them to limit their intellectual attainments to those two speculations. Poor and conceited Sally was doomed to perpetual disappointments. Her elaborate attention to her toilette, like the display of her accomplishments, and the liberality of her smiles and ogles, might deserve, but could not command, success. She went wherever she could go; con-

formed to all humours; liked London; doted on the country; was happiest at home; enjoyed society; 'learned from the wisdom of age, and was cheered by the sallies of youth,' all to no purpose, as she never advanced further than to be bridemaid at a wedding, or gossip to a baby. Fifty years' experience might have convinced her that she had no dexterity in angling for hearts; but having been early persuaded that every woman ought to marry, she endeavours, while secretly abandoning hope, more earnestly to save appearances by representing that celibacy which she considers a cruel misfortune to be her decided choice, and complaining of her own fastidiousness on the score of lovers, instead of admitting that she never was in a capacity to choose. Increasing age will require more sub-

stantial comforts, and render her slavish fondness for flimsy dress more inconvenient; but I foresee that her eyes, or rather her tongue, will multiply conquests, till every discarded frippery that moults from her shrivelled form will give place to the imagined anguish of some faithful Waitfort, to whom she will talk of sending a thirteenth, and she sincerely hopes a final refusal. She will even pretend to be alarmed lest her physician should be going to make a proposal as he waits for his last fee, and will die contriving a proper bridal dress for ladies who marry when not very young.

"'O the dark days of vanity! while here
How tasteless, and how terrible when gone!'
YOUNG.

"I am never so offended with my own sex as when, losing sight of their proper

rank in creation as rational and accountable beings, and joint-sovereigns of this lower world, they try to fasten themselves on man as an unsought and inconvenient appendage, whose helplessness taxes his activity, whose extravagance stimulates him to acts of cupidity, whose weakness diminishes his usefulness, or whose absurdity limits his intelligence. If it be a mother's first duty to procure husbands for her daughters, surely she ought at the same time to prepare them to become wives, and to cultivate matronly qualities, that man may know that the Circes who beset him in every path will prove helpmates as well as sirens. Society is now in a different stage from that in which the fiat was given — 'Let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.' Civilisation, or shall I say

luxury, has attained to a point, where the difficulty of providing for a family often imposes celibacy on man as a moral obligation; and if that difficulty be enhanced by the expensive uselessness of young women, the sordid but true remark must be uttered, that the chance of their being promoted to be wives depends on the weight of their purses. Only men of large fortunes can afford to purchase a costly toy; and looking at the expectations and the wants to which most mothers educate their daughters, I cannot take the number of gentlemen who may be esteemed unexceptionable matches in England at above ten thousand. Considering one-fourth of these as not marrying men, and an equal number as persuaded that a wife's fortune is useful for younger children; allowing for this preference for 'an unfettered

free condition,' which dissipation engenders, and for prudential, or, if you will, mercenary motives for wedlock; here are but five thousand proper husbands for all our excessively well-educated elegant girls, of whom I conceive that there are at least one hundred thousand constantly in the market. As only one, therefore, out of twenty seems born to be a great lady, the remainder must make up their minds to be old maids, or wives to men who have their fortunes to make, and this, too, at the risk of bankruptcy, expatriation, or imprisonment. I will entreat them at least to exonerate their consciences from the reproach of exposing their husbands to the choice of those calamities by fictitious wants, by contempt for simple unexpensive enjoyments, by neglect of domestic duties, by inattention to pecuniary concerns,

and that wretched littleness of mind which often serves as an excuse to men for concealing from their wives the real state of their affairs, under the pretence that they would not bear the discovery, or are too little acquainted with money matters to understand the nature of financial embarrassments.

" I offer the above calculation, with its moral improvement, as an answer to the fair correspondent who has applied to me for a commodity which, to confess one truth, I have not in my disposal. Bluntly, to own another truth, I deny her present worthiness to possess that boon. She is young, indeed, and, if improvable, I will consider if any thing can be done for her. Penelope's web, Eve's bower-economics, patient Grizzle's trials, are all in my thoughts. But as the agency

of her own heart and head are necessary to the execution of any of these tasks, I must be convinced that Miss Flyabout is not a lusus-naturæ without either of these organs, and as certain that they are only incased in a petrifying envelope of dissipation, before I can take any other step for procuring her a husband than that of publishing her own letter, which I fear is an advertisement, reportable to the stamp office, announcing that she is to be sold to the best bidder.

" ' Dear Mrs. Macmendus,

" ' I am just turned of nineteen; papa says I am his pretty girl, and mamma calls me quite a beauty. I have had an excellent education, for I play on the flageolet, and waltz to admiration; besides which, I recite better than any of my acquaintance, and can say Rimini, Lalla Rookh, and most of

the Irish melodies by heart. I attend scientific lectures, and draw caricatures of the auditors so delightfully that every creature knows who they are; and yet for all this I have left school three years, and, would you think it, never had an offer.

"'Papa lives in very good style, and mamma is excessively fond of society, so we never are alone; and I can talk to the beaux very well, lolling my head against the wainscoat and tossing my hair about, and saying, 'dear, how hot!' or, 'what a fright that is!' or, 'how was Vestris dressed last night?' or, 'where do you drive your tilbury to-morrow morning?' I don't quite say, 'will you take me along with you?' Pray do you think I should?

"'Marianne says it will be quite time enough for me to expect offers half a dozen years hence; but she is an old

maid turned of four and twenty, and very splenetic and spiteful. Half a dozen years hence! how the world must have altered within these two or three years, since I had time to study. I am sure then the ladies in all the novels were married, or had two or three duels fought for them, long before my age; and Miss Pipingdale, our teacher, told us that she might have been run away with by an officer when she was just turned of fifteen; and very sorry she now is that she was cross and afraid to go as he is now a general, and she, poor thing, is Miss Pipingdale still. Do but think how provoking it is when a very tonish man, after staring at me for half an hour, only holds out one finger and says, 'do you mean to dance?' and I am forced to say, 'yes,' and lay hold of it.

"'Yes, now I recollect, I had some-

thing once like an offer; but you shall judge. To be sure it was at a ball; I don't think I should ever accept an offer that was not made at a ball, unless it was while dashing away in a phaeton, in a fine style, four-in-hand. Well, about this offer. It was just as we had finished La Pastorale, and my partner quite sighed as he led me to mamma, and rather squeezed my hand and asked me if I remembered the first step in the ladder of matrimony, for he had got his foot on it. And I only said, 'oh! pray march up as quick as you can, for there are a great many standing there.' But I actually frightened him, for when mamma made room for him on the ottoman he bowed and walked off. Now it was all owing to Marianne's bidding me laugh at the fellows, and she did so out of spite. I was ready to cry all night, — but I

am not quite sure that he pressed my hand.

"'Now, dear Mrs. Macmendus, I dare say you remember before dandies came into fashion; pray tell me what sort of creatures macaronies and bucks were, and if people then married faster. Though I don't believe all that Marianne says, I am quite frightened when I see such rows of old misses in the back seats looking quite forlorn and faded in spite of their pink feathers and gold muslins, and so very smiling and obliging to each other, and not a soul noticing them, except they are women of rank and get taken out by some slim curate or starved physician, like Miss Clay Buckhurst Falconer. I think, sooner than come to this I would die, or even stay at home for ever.

"'Oh, my dearest Mrs. Macmendus,

I should be so very much obliged to you if you could tell me how I could obtain a husband. It is a particularly good one that I want; for he must be a smart man, or I shall not like him; and papa says he must be a rich one, for he cannot give me a shilling of fortune; and mamma says he must have a place in the country, for she is tired of being all the year in London, and shall like to spend a few months with me every summer; and Harold hopes that he will have a large manor for him to shoot over; and Justinian prays that he may have fat rectories at his disposal; so, you see, I really must have an uncommonly good husband. Now if you know of such an one that wants a very pretty, very smart, very accomplished wife, who has a great deal of taste and a most respectable circle of acquaintance, I really shall

be for ever indebted to you if you will recommend me, and I will send you the best favour I can purchase, and a large piece of bride-cake. But tell him papa will expect a settlement, because every body has one, and I must have a carriage, and a butler, and a lady's maid, and —— oh! but if he should say any thing about expence, tell him I hate shabby mercenary people. Further, please to say that I am the best tempered creature in the world, and always laughing except when Marianne vexes me.

"'I am sure I should be so happy if I were married; for mamma would buy me such beautiful wedding clothes, and I never would ask Marianne to my house. My dear Mrs. Macmendus, on second thoughts, don't say any thing about settlements, only that I cannot do without plenty of pin-money;

and, if you succeed, you will for ever oblige

'Your most devoted admirer,
'PHILIPPA FLYABOUT.'

"I shall conclude with the narrative of another correspondent, whom parental imprudence has placed in the degrading class of disappointed fortune-hunters, while ingenuousness and sensibility seem to have entitled her to rank among that superior class of women who confer, rather than receive, an obligation on their marriage. If the insertion should prevent one proud improvident father from absurdly and meanly subjecting his offspring to the pain and ignominy of dependance, by enlarging their wants and squandering the means of supplying them; or if it should save one Euphemia from insult and sorrow, I shall have done some-

thing towards my favourite scheme of improving the rationality of society, and of fixing women in their proper sphere.

" ' Madam,

" ' From a lady who advocates female improvement, we must expect that female difficulties will meet with a ready consideration; for, though I infer that you are more disposed to make us amiable than to make us fortunate, there are situations in which we are precluded from the practice of active virtues, and find those which are called passive almost too arduous for frail humanity. My own history shall exemplify this observation: it too minutely corresponds with the case of many unprotected females, to subject you to the censure of personality if you should give it publicity.

" ' My father was the youngest son of a baronet, and saw the paternal estate devolve on his eldest brother. The more lucrative and active professions were assigned to his seniors, and himself was destined for the church at an age which negatived the supposition of choice or the possibility of remonstrance. It was esteemed a great act of prudence to advance a moiety of his share of the sum reserved for younger children to purchase the reversion of a very valuable living, and he was now considered in the family as well provided for. Impressed with this idea, he went to college, associated with men of his own rank, and could not resist the temptations to expence which their example and his own inclinations presented. The death of his father put a stop to the funds which supplied this profusion ; but there was

no giving up good society, and old Dr. Feedwell had not received an everlasting induction to the rectory of Buttercroft. My father, therefore, on taking orders, accepted a small curacy, lived at his ease, was domesticated with the best families, obtained the character of a very agreeable man who was every where welcome, and at the age of thirty became incumbered with what he called a *few* debts, and was put in possession of the desired living.

" ' To say the truth, his circumstances were not so far embarrassed that a prudent matrimonial connection might not have sufficed to give him a fair start in life; but my mother's beauty had then caught his eye; she had high connections; he was attached by college friendships to her brothers, and felt obliged by the hospitality of her father. Fortune was no object; it was a merce-

nary mercantile consideration, unworthy of regard when put in competition with birth, beauty, and merit. I will not say that they trusted in that Providence which feeds the raven; but they felt it impossible that his grace, and the countess, and my lord, to whom they were respectively allied, should suffer them to starve. They married, determined to learn economy; to live in retirement; to pay off their debts, and save fortunes for their children.

" ' I am fearful, dear madam, that your sagacity has anticipated the result. Though they married for love, they soon found that there was no existing without society. It was impossible to break off pleasant connections, and impolitic to neglect great ones. Something would offer; times would mend; and it was soon found out that Buttercroft was an improvable living, at

least, one which admitted an application of the land-screw. The tithes were raised till the farmers deserted the church, execrating the avarice of parsons and the ignorance of men of fashion. Economy was enforced in the culinary department till no servants could be induced to remain; and the poor looked back to the hospitality of old Feedwell, regretting the savoury meals supplied by his kitchen scraps. Children multiplied, but preferment did not come, nor did times mend. Hints were given to my uncle—the baronet, and to my uncle—the admiral; but they too had children. Weary of waiting, my father exerted himself strenuously at a general election in favour of Mr. Wrangle against Lord Courtly, well knowing that a good living (the rector of which was in a decline) was in Wrangle's gift, and was

tenable with Buttercroft. The rector soon died, but the living was given to the brother of Wrangle's mistress, who had taken orders on the prospect of this advantage.

" ' My father was now scouted by the party with which he had hitherto acted, as a deserter, and soon had recourse to an expedient often adopted by people of declining fortunes. After having many years laughed at his aunt, Lady Featherfew, he invited her to end her days at the rectory, assuring her that she should receive every possible attention, which he was determined to bestow under the impression that she must, from her parsimonious habits, have made large savings out of her jointure. The offer was accepted. For several years we experienced all the uneasiness which wayward importance can inflict on those who must

submit to its tyranny; and at her death my father found that neither the jointure nor the savings equalled report, and that he was only left joint legatee with a married toady and her present waiting-maid.

"Our creditors, whose forbearance had been won by the promise of having their demands remitted at Lady Featherfew's death, now became clamorous. My father again laid a statement of his affairs before his eldest brother, and received a competent share of reproof and advice. He summoned his creditors, and as nothing better offered, they accepted such a composition as his legacy permitted him to pay. He now took the tithe into his own hands, and commenced farmer; his mortification at any departure from his rank of gentleman being soothed by an expectation of

partaking in the exorbitant profits which it is said that unpopular class of society has been for so many years accumulating. I cannot explain why this scheme also failed, having only heard general complaints of bad seasons and peculating bailiffs; but the patriarchal plan of having all the necessaries of life within ourselves, and cutting the connections of butcher, brewer, baker, and cheese-factor, proved less productive than any of the preceding, and the statement of agricultural profit and loss presented a formidable deficit.

" ' My father was of a sanguine temperament; my mother was an obedient wife. He now resolved to push his children in the world, and let them help each other. My mother undertook the charge of her daughters: she found out that one resembled a reigning toast;

another looked like a girl of quality; a third had talent; and the fourth had a *je ne sais quoi* that every one admired. Charles my eldest brother was sent to India; and by the favour of Mr. Wrangle, who had now got into office, Frederic obtained a place in the treasury, introductory to his advancement in the fiscal or diplomatic line. Girls of fashion, whose brothers might attain the post of prime minister or governor-general, had nothing to fear; good connections were every thing; and in proof of this, as we were successively brought out, we got the best partners at the race balls; and not only were our arrivals announced at Bath and Brighton, but when any of us spent a winter in London with some of our great relations, we were named in the list of partakers of Lady Evergreen's dejeuné, and set down for the first set

at Mrs. Rainbow's ball. But we had no offers; other portionless girls of fashion were in the market; we had all our chances; were tried separately and collectively—as distinct stars, and then clustered in a constellation; yet for many years neither the attraction of charming sisters nor a very charming wife allured an elder brother, and we were taught to look like icebergs in the presence of pretty fellows or vulgars. At last Theodosia, the youngest of us, hooked a man of fortune: he was extremely ugly indeed and almost an idiot—the very man we all laughed at when he was nearly encaged by the net of a rival; but still (enchanting sound!) a man of fortune had married one of the Miss Fitzgranby's! We tried to talk our new brother into consequence in the neighbourhood: his person and understanding were given

up as untenable subjects; but it was possible to enlarge on his fine place, and his excessive attachment to Theodosia. We also gave him credit for an excellent heart, and were sure we should find him the kindest of sons and brothers.

" 'This was a year of extraordinary good luck; for Clarinda also had an offer, with which, after long demur, and many a southern look after a London partner, whom poor Clarinda in vain expected to come to her rescue, she reluctantly closed. Mr. Ducape was neither so silly nor so ugly as Theodosia's husband; but then his fortune had been acquired by trade, and my father once determined to forbid him his house. When the marriage was resolved upon, we qualified and concealed; opened a sluice for some good blood through a maternal ancestor; in-

sisted that his manners were not mercantile; praised his liberality, and talked of Clarinda's diamonds. I have now reason to believe that we then had a chance of securing a real friend; but Ducape soon perceived that he was only tolerated by his wife and her relations. He therefore removed to an estate which he purchased in Wales; and by giving her to understand that she had not married a Sir John Anvil, he has converted her into a good, and, I have also heard, a happy wife. They write to us every six months to announce presents of mutton and moor-game, and to tell us the present state of their family, adding something civil about the distance preventing personal intercourse.

" 'The sun of our prosperity was soon shorn of its beams. Mr. Wrangle's party went out of power. Frederic

was considered as one of their myrmidons, and away went every chance of fiscal or diplomatic distinction. A deeper sorrow followed; Charles died in India before it was in his power to transmit bills for our fortunes, with which hope the generous boy consoled himself when reluctantly compelled to forego the solace of fraternal affection. My father, who had hitherto supported himself with what he called more than Roman fortitude, met the pressure of age with that worst companion, a broken and wounded spirit. From his last hope, his children, he now derived no comfort. Charles, the pride of his heart, was dead; Frederic a burden on his embarrassed fortune; Theodosia entirely engrossed by the duties which her absurdly imperative husband and numerous family required; my mother, Margaret, and myself, entirely depend-

ant on him for support; and he far in the vale of years, with a life-income and no savings. They who can sustain self-reproach profit by self-communion; but the number is small. My father was of an irritable disposition, and grew querulous from the retrospect of his own improvidence. With declining health his inclination for society diminished. He felt or fancied himself a less welcome guest; but home was not more agreeable because his residence there was compulsory. He saw our approaching destitution, which he had now no means to prevent; and he read reproach in our silent depression. To prevent its becoming audible, he accused us as the cause of his miseries. My mother was a bad manager, Frederic a fine gentleman, I and Margaret helpless and extravagant. Alas! till lately I had always heard frugality spoken of

as a Ducape virtue, and industry decried as a Featherfew accomplishment equally derogatory to Fitzgranby blood. And the information that he was a completely ruined man was as astounding as the catalogue of our offences; for though we had before heard of perplexities, the tidings were always accompanied with an assurance that he had discovered a straight road which would lead him out of every difficulty.

" ' To be brief, madam, my father died; we had our six months residence in a stranger's house, and then the world was all before us. The head of our family would not permit his brother's widow to starve; he boarded her, therefore, in a market-town; and as she is grown infirm, Margaret shares her bed and saves the expence of one servant. Frederic had an early hint that he

was expected to provide for himself: he disposed of the few effects he possessed in an equipment for the Spanish main, embarked to join the patriotic army, and was heard of no more. I have had my choice to live with Theodosia, and to undertake the duties of governess and nurse to her girls without emolument, or to accept the office of toadeater and first dresser to Lady Fitzgranby's eldest daughter, who is become a countess; but I am interdicted from disgracing my kindred by accepting a remunerated situation with strangers. I have been favoured with a probationary residence in each family, but am not yet able to say which I can best endure,—the sorrow of an amiable, ill-mated sister, or the insolence of a little mind elated by prosperity; the ill-manners of children whom a weak, obstinate father expects me to improve

without giving me power to restrain them, or the apathy of a proud relation who compels me to eat the bread of humiliation, while she gratifies her own vanity by assuming the praise of munificence in shielding me from the consequences of paternal improvidence.

" ' Can you wonder, madam, that my eye often glances at the cottage girl plying her bobbins in the shade, and enjoying the dry crust and thin beverage of comparative independence; or that, looking back at my past life, I say, why am I thus cast upon society, indigent but high-minded, friendless but not culpable? The superfluities that were provided for me I enjoyed; I did what I was enjoined to do; and fancied, when I had contributed to make a day pass pleasantly, that my duties were discharged. I knew it was expected that I should contract

a wealthy marriage, but I am guiltless of the cruelty of a refusal; and if no Crœsus from the east, or Gyges from the west, chose to task himself with the expence of maintaining me, is it a crime that the high blood in my veins requires refection? Though accustomed to every indulgence, I have limited my wants and contracted my desires until a little would content me; but that little I cannot procure unembittered by the gall of gratuitous and involuntary servitude. The curate's 'radish and egg,' or the farmer's meal 'of sanguine flesh and farinaceous balls,' I could relish, so that I were again restored to the rights of equality without being compelled to dread a frown or to shrink under a contradiction. But the farmer is terrified at the name of a fine lady; and the curate remembers that I had an extravagant

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father, without also recollecting that the surest way of making us avoid a fault is to have previously suffered from the consequences of that fault in others.

" ' Pardon me, madam, for speaking of marriage in the mercenary tone of a stipendiary; and believe that I have a heart capable of liberal sentiments on this subject, and susceptible of the indelible impressions of esteem and gratitude, if a generous mind could be found to raise me from the beggary to which I was unconsciously accessory, and the servile though unremunerated dependance to which I am condemned; rescuing me by the only means which those who grudgingly bestow my hard-earned fare will allow for the liberation of the unfortunate

'Euphemia Fitzgranby.' "

I have already observed that this morning we were all in a very serious

humour, and the situation and feelings of Euphemia Fitzgranby seemed so distressing, that I could not help seriously asking myself how I could endure a similar trial? At the same time I did hope such an event was hardly possible. What passed in my mind had so strongly impressed my countenance, that I detected my grandmother in the fault of watching me, while (suffering her knitting needles to rest) her arm reposed on the table. I triumphantly held up a flannel waistcoat which I had fabricated for one of Ellen's *protégés*, while she diverted us with the struggles of husband-hunters.

My grandmother, who had been just roused from her reverie by an unexpected visit from Mr. James, gave me an approving smile, and confessed her error in meditating a funeral oration

over industry, supposing it one of the defunct virtues, when so bright a proof of its being in existence was passing before her eyes. "Mark this day, Emma," said she, "with a white bean; you have been usefully employed, and therefore it has not been lost."

A whispered conversation ensued between her and our good vicar respecting the state of affairs at Orissa Park, of which I only caught the conclusion. Mr. James said, he came to divert his mind from evils which he could not remedy; all he would say was, that the storm continued to gather, but the bolt had not yet fallen. He appeared agitated, and begged her to resume the subject which his intrusion had interrupted.

"Our readings, my good sir," said she, "have led me to inquire whether the general quantum of happiness has

been increased by the expatriation of industry, prudence, and frugality from the fine world,—virtues which I have heard wittily indentified with pincushions and needle cases; or, whether the present mode of *killing* time instead of *employing* it has not rendered life a heavier load; and I apply to you, as a more practical judge of society, to give me your decision. I was early taught that industry (the merciful imposition upon degraded Adam) was, next to religion, the surest antidote to melancholy, and the best bracer of our faculties. Are we to measure life by the number of pulsations, or the routine of meals and visits; or are actions and mental exercise the true definitions of existence? I learnt that a day usefully spent provided an opiate for our pillows, unknown to those who only rose in the

morning to consume their hours in exhilarating methods of self-enjoyment; and I was also told that, as the possibility of great achievements were awarded to few, the humblest endeavours to do good to others, like the cup of cold water eternized by our Saviour's approbation, would not lose their reward.

"But why do I wonder that the world of fashion has banished these, shall I call them, home-spun virtues? for it contrives to whirl on without them, and must consist of people to whom expence and forecast never can be of consequence. True, the scene is perpetually shifting, and the actors drop into oblivion, even faster than Mirza saw the flux of human beings fall through chasms in the bridge in Addison's inimitable vision. But new candidates for the distinction of high

ton are daily rushing forward, and the ranks are always crowded, including even many who were supposed to have had their day, but on whom bankruptcy has acted like the renovating kettle of Medea. Money being a non-essential in this grade, there can be no reason why the female part of it should be taught its value, or know how to acquire, to save, or to employ it. I presume by some powerful enchantment my whole sex is now comprised under the enviable distinction of fine ladies; for in the literary regale lately spread for our amusement, no young woman is allowed any other occupation than to kill time, spend money, and make conquests. Greatly preferring a visit to the Douglass sister-hood, or the contrivances of Mrs. Pringle and Miss Nancy Eydent, I think these books should be prohibited

to all girls who are not legitimate candidates for coronets; unless England is become a real El Dorado, where every one digs up as much gold as he wants, or our girls are actually metamorphosed into ethereal sylphids suitably attired in a vesture of rose leaves, fed from the nectary of woodbines, and conveyed where they wish to go on the wings of butterflies; and, therefore, having no corporeal wants, need never inquire how such wants are to be supplied, any more than the flowers which I see you are admiring on my mantle-piece. But, Mr. James, do frankly tell me, is the present world happier than mine was?"

"Not a whit," replied our guest; "but, courage, my good old friend; expensive uselessness is now grown so vulgar, that, like morbid sensibility and excessive refinement, it must soon go

out of fashion. Ladies of high rank now pique themselves on being economic notables; a few anomalous absurdities at present adhere to their practice; but as I allow a degree of merit in simply not determining to be wrong, I think, in time, becoming useful or even prudent may grow sufficiently genteel to escape the fulminations of our poets and novelists. I shall certainly hail this improvement, being scandalized at hearing the bourgeoise ladies of my acquaintance denounce housewife qualities as incompatible with 'the gentler graces of the heart,' and worse than a north-easter to the fair flowers of imagination; trash which would have disgusted me if uttered in Lord Arbury's saloon, but downright Babylonish in the crowded *coterie* of 'a chair-lumbered closet.'"

"The infection," said my grand-

mother, "has extended to our country cowslips. Poor Mary Brown is become so bewildered with the dilemmas of marchionesses, as to consider village distress quite beneath her attention. Indeed, she now reads, talks, and thinks so much about peeresses, that, deeming titles sufficiently plentiful for all claimants in the great world, she bitterly bewails paternal prejudice which dooms her to rusticate at Ringrove."

"But," resumed Mr. James, "the virtues of the old school have a more formidable enemy than fashion, whose proverbial mutability always affords hope for improvement. What say you to the ministers of religion entering the field against those virtues which produce order in conduct? and, because their exertion is necessarily limited to the present life, voting them to be

carnal, and not suited to the spiritual state of an advanced christian?"

"I should say," replied she, "that, whoever discouraged what makes us better members of society, could never succeed in making us truly religious; and that whatever virtue tended to promote the real welfare of mankind became an evangelical grace when performed on christian motives."

"Just so;" was the remark of Mr. James; "but these phantoms, notoriety and excitation, which you and I so execrate, sometimes invade the pulpit and mystify its authoritative information. Ever adhering to the conviction that christianity was intended to ameliorate the condition of our present state, as well as to guide us to a better, I have never countenanced those distinctions of 'the religious world' and 'serious christians,' as

opposed to moral people, which are become popular; believing them in many instances indefinite, erroneous, and often uncharitable. In my professional studies I am partial to those divines who to theological learning unite an insight into human nature; in other words, who evince a sound understanding, which, of all our mental qualities, does most good and least harm. Among writers of this description, I need hardly name Tillotson, Secker, Jortin, and Paley, as entitled to pre-eminence. I wave the disputed point of the thorough orthodoxy of the latter; it is sufficient to establish his title to being a true champion of the church of Christ, that he published no heterodox opinions; and the invidious gossip circulated to degrade his memory should be unnoticed, except as a warning to eminent persons

to be guarded in their badinage, lest some eaves-dropper should pervert their *jeux d'esprits* into solemn confessions of faith and rules of practice, while the speaker recollected them as idle inconsiderate words calling for repentance.

" I have lately," continued Mr. James, " met with some sermons, the composition of an admired preacher, to whom I readily give the recommendation of eloquence and sincerity, while I lament that he sometimes places evangelical graces in opposition to social duties. That you may judge whether I am fastidious, I will repeat a part of one of his pathetic appeals to his congregation, ' My labours are in vain among you: on this holy day you listen to my admonitions, and then return, one to your farm, the other to your merchandise.' I recollected

Paley's remark, that hours spent in business were generally usefully and innocently employed; and I felt inclined to ask the complainer where else, when the sabbath was closed, would he have his congregation go, in obedience to the injunction, 'Six days shalt thou labour.' With bodies refreshed by the repose, and souls sustained and nourished by the spiritual food, which a day spent in the courts of God supplies, true Christians devote the intermediate week to the conscientious and diligent discharge of those duties which belong to the station of life in which it has pleased God to place them. My worthy brother's ministry was appropriated to a populous town, and probably there were few of his auditors who could, without dereliction of actual duty, dedicate their lives to religious exercises; and, looking abroad into the

world, weighing the contingencies and necessary claims of society, you, Mrs. Loveday, shall tell me, is the quietist alternately kneeling in his oratory and dozing in his elbow chair, or the provident parent exerting himself in some useful calling or civic duty to provide for his family and contribute to the stability of the body politic, the more respectable character, or I would even go further and say, the truer Christian ?"

" The former part," replied my grandmother, "should only be assumed by people who, like me, are dismissed by age from active exertion. I know you assign equal importance to the feeble hands of Moses, when elevated in prayer, as to the vigorous arm of Joshua, when wielding the sword. But it would be absurd to transpose their

relative situations; I agree with your sentiments; pray proceed."

"It forcibly struck me," resumed Mr. James, "that a happy opportunity for improvement had been sacrificed to oratorical effect; nay, even scripture wrested for the sake of pathos. The farmers and merchandisers whom our Lord condemned never attended to the king's invitation to the marriage feast. Temporal pursuits engrossed their whole time; but the numerous congregations which waited on this gentleman's ministry evinced a better spirit. In the preceding part of his discourse he dwelt forcibly on our general tendency to do evil. Justly so, I admit; though I wished a line had been drawn distinguishing infirmity from presumptuous guilt. Surely it would have been better to have instructed his hearers how their respec-

tive callings might have been innocently pursued, than by a sweeping censure to permit diligence to be included in their misdeeds; and as their station in life made the offence unavoidable, were they to quarrel with Providence for bringing them into a world so constituted, or with political institutions for not reversing the decree of God, by supplying to all the means of existence without the intervention of productive labour? I have not found in these discourses a refutation of such an inference. They reiterate instructions to spiritualise our minds, and to withdraw our affections from this world; but are silent as to the part which we should perform while abiding in it. It will hardly be alleged that the human race are naturally disposed to be honest, industrious, prudent, orderly, and moral: but if this opinion were urged I would say, 'Look round

with attention, be candid, and then reply.' The Saviour of the world and the divinely inspired Apostles adapted their instructions to the relative situations of their auditors, and placed the curb of a religion which searches the heart on that intercourse with society which as men they were compelled to hold. For it is not the morality of the porch or the academy that I recommend to the pulpit; I would preach as Paul did to Felix, and reason 'on righteousness and temperance' as connected 'with judgment to come.' I would prescribe social and civic virtues, as they were enforced in the sermon on the Mount and the concluding chapters of the epistle to the Romans; and I would give to the sabbath its true designation, as made for man, for his bodily, mental, moral, and spiritual improvement. Fi-

nally, I would describe religion as not enjoining abstraction and seclusion, but (between its sanctifying intervals of devotion) accompanying us into the common affairs of life, and hallowing all our honest exertions, by continually prompting that communion with our God which speaks in pious ejaculations, and a perpetual resignation of thoughts, words, deeds, and even desires, to His will and word.

"Such was the religion which Christ and his Apostles preached; instead of paralizing industry, divine and holy example has sanctified labour, which is enjoined as the positive condition of receiving sustenance. The man who makes no provision for his family is reprobated as worse than an infidel. We derive the precept of 'providing things honest in the sight of all men' from apostolical authority; nay, that homely,

obsolete, I had almost said excommunicated virtue, economy, even that has had immortal beauty stamped on its harsh features, by the solemn injunction to ‘ gather up the fragments which remain, that nothing may be lost,’ uttered by the Lord of the elements, when his creative power had so multiplied food as to prove that the wants of thousands could be supplied by a word. But as the miraculous supply displayed infinite power, so did the precept evince infinite wisdom.

“ As a contemplative humourist, with a cast of the cynic in my composition, I may perhaps press my deductions too far; much farther, I am well aware, than my reverend brother designed; but not farther than my acquaintance with mankind convinces me they may be pressed by persons evil disposed to Christianity, who delight in represent-

ing it as incompatible with our public and private occupations; nor yet farther than his doctrine may be misinterpreted by well-disposed, but misinformed, bewildered minds. It has been said that Socrates brought down philosophy to dwell with men. The Gospel teaches us a religion which, while it prepares us for heaven, will, in proportion to our observance of its precepts, make our present abode resemble that to which we are commanded to aspire."

So much had been said of industry, that I continued plying my needle with indefatigable perseverance, though my arm ached, and the Smiths had joined our tea-table. I thought every body seemed unusually grave, and regarded me with more than common attention, blended too with a kindness which wore the air of

commiseration, "Surely," thought I, "they must know how unkindly my father treats me." This thought, added to a consciousness of the state of my purse, kept me from indulging in my usual philippics against parsimonious calculations, want of taste, and servile occupations, which, being the faults that had most annoyed me amongst my rural neighbours, I esteemed it my duty to mark with continual reprobation. But this evening I felt so humble as carefully to pick up the litter which Kitty and Ellen had made with their millinery, and, arranging the fragments in order, observed, "nothing should be lost."

My grandmother looked at me very seriously. I hope she did not suspect that I could be guilty of an irreverent travesty. "And for what purpose,

said she, "Emma, are you trespassing on the housemaid's perquisites?"

I fancied I could convert them to some use, with a little joining, and plaiting, and coaxing. "Now pray don't laugh; my aim was to fabricate a bonnet for Fanny Ellis, who applied for one after Ellen had given away all her annual presents, and I saw her return in tears."

"Will not the trouble be more than the cost of a new piece, Miss Herbert?" inquired Mr. Smith, who, much to my surprise, and in direct opposition to his usual character, appeared interested by these '*femalities*.'

"It will take me nearly a day, but the poor girl will be made happy; and, to own the truth, just now my purse has greater claims on it than its contents will answer."

I never looked up to see how my re-

mark was taken; its sincerity was attested by a tear; and it was so truly the spontaneous effusion of my heart, that I entirely forgot I had made it, till subsequent events brought it to my recollection.

In the course of the evening the conversation turned on the rage for accomplishments, occasioned by a portionless girl in our neighbourhood being recently sent to what is termed a finishing school. "Would it not be wise in parents," said my grandmother, "before they determine to bestow expensive accomplishments on their daughters, that they looked at their future prospects, and considered whether the sum so expended might with propriety be spared from their fortunes; whether their daughters are likely to have leisure to pursue them; and then, unless there existed that determinate taste and bent of mind which is de-

nominated genius, and of which it would be illiberal and unkind, perhaps impolitic, to neglect cultivation, ought not the required sum to be devoted to a more economical purpose? Young women of every class in middle life now receive the very same degree of ornamental education, which no farther since than my early days was exclusively appropriated to the daughters of rank and affluence, in whose general style of living (permit me *en passant* to remark) there has been little change, and who are now scarce distinguished in appearance from people supposed to be still making their fortunes: yet in this middle rank the strainings of pride and luxury impose duties on wives and mothers which must prevent them from continuing to cultivate the talents to which in their youth so much was sacrificed, and which, strange

to say, were considered as the means of placing them in their present situation.

"Should girls then belonging to this most important part of society be suffered to remain, in this enlightened age, ignorant, aukward, vulgar, unrefined, uncultivated? By no means, except in the artificial sense in which these terms are sometimes used. I have seen not only very good, but pleasant, intelligent *Goths*, whose minds were not contracted nor their manners repulsive, and whose chance of being well established in life was quite as good as that of their cotemporaries. The style of education which I recommend is far from diminishing the sum of female attractions. The unaccomplished girl, not being accustomed to display, may escape the notice of cursory observers; but the approbation of such admirers seldom ripens into per-

manent attachment, for the heart which is often thus struck becomes too callous to be penetrable. In the mean time the unaccomplished (mark I do not say the uneducated) girl, free from the pangs of rivalry, may, by cordially joining in the praise of a skilful musician, a sweet songstress, or a correct designer and neat executor of any work of taste or production of art, reveal the charms which man generally finds most invincible. The cultivation of the mind, the heart, and the temper, is not expensive. Reading is always a home employment; and, when directed to useful and instructing subjects, is a source of improvement as well as delight. It requires no applauding witnesses; it is the solace of the domestic or solitary evening; it renovates the mind when worn down by economical exertion; it opens a

Lethe to petty cares; and in the evening of life, when failing sight banishes this with other delights, the stores with which it has enriched memory furnish an inexhaustible banquet to the meditative loneliness of deep thought. The expense of time requisite for well-directed reading is not great, for the fruits of literature require to be digested as well as devoured; and those to whom, from their numerous avocations, hours are precious, may acquire a habit of pursuing many useful branches of industry, while others regale their understanding with salutary food; and in a family circle, what pastime more delightful, than when one sister is reading aloud and the rest are pursuing their various employments? So Addison has depicted his Lady Lizard and her daughters; and the pleasing portraiture was, as

history assures us, realized in the court of the accomplished Mary, who was remarkable for having read much and to the best purpose, as well as for bringing industry into fashion. I am not pleading in behalf of frivolous studies, much less of those which mislead or pervert. The mind had better remain vacant than receive unwholesome nutriment. Tillotson was the oracle of Lady Lizard's boudoir; and Queen Mary's reading, while she and her suite ornamented the walls of Hampton Court, was of a similar character. In the present age so much that is intrinsically good and improving wears the shape of amusement, that it must be a very perverted obliquity of mental vision which delights in the absurd or contaminating nonsense sometimes raised into notoriety by the spurious attraction of novelty. Whatever the

directors of public taste may pretend to the contrary, the school of excitement of German metaphysics and of German horrors cannot improve English wives and mothers, even in their own private opinion.

" To regulate the temper and cultivate the kind affections of the heart, neither time nor money are required. And let me, my dear girls, for the hundredth time, assure you, that a sweet temper, and kind disposition, are in the eyes of creation's lord most valuable. To correct errors and encourage excellence in these respects is the peculiar province of a judicious mother. Graceful manners, indeed, often require farther aid, and are seldom effectually obtained save by the study of correct models. The advantage of scientific dancing in persons of the rank I am addressing may be ques-

tioned; but an elementary knowledge of the art, so far as it tends to bestow a graceful management of the person, seems essential to a proper share of self-confidence, the communication of which is generally beyond the mother's power. But in various minutiæ, as well as in the more important departments, manners may be deemed *her* peculiar province. To her, for instance, belongs the duty of correcting awkward or unbecoming movements; inelegant, ungrammatical language; ungraceful, unhealthy postures; unpleasant exertions or intonations of voice; and a slatternly, heedless disposition of apparel. All this being premised, and the home-bred girl supposed to possess equal advantages of person, I think her kind-heartedness, good-temper, and general information, with an artless or (if you will grant it me I have no objection

to) graceful manner, stands as good a chance of becoming a votary of Hymen as the most finished disciples of Polymnia, Euterpe, and Terpsichore. And as she will possess the originality and novelty which are now so attractive, I will venture to wager twenty pots of coffee to one, that she throws into the shade every pretender on whom the money has been wasted that would have been better reserved to save her from the fate of a Sally Scanty and an Euphemia Fitz Granby."

CHAP. XI.

I was awakened in the middle of the night by a loud sob at my chamber-door, and heard Martha exclaim, "Oh, Miss Herbert! if you wish to see my good mistress alive, you must come directly."

"Stay with me, Martha," I shrieked out. "Stay and help me. I shall faint! What will become of me?"

"I cannot stay, Miss; there's nobody to take care of you; so pray don't faint away just now. We are all wanted to help my dear mistress, who is taken with her old spasms in the stomach."

Fainting, when alone, is a most inconvenient misfortune; and the fear of doing so really is known to prevent the paroxysm, if it supervene merely

from an affection of the nerves, by giving a different impulse to the animal spirits which the love of life mechanically summons to relieve us under extraordinary exertions of the passions. Instead of fainting, I rushed into my grandmother's room, and saw the venerable sufferer; her features contracted; her face bathed with icy dews; Bridget rubbing her torpid limbs; and Ellen supporting her and applying teaspoonfuls of ether. "She does now swallow," said Ellen, casting an affectionate but sorrowful glance at me. "Dearest Emma, assist Martha to supply me with hot flannels and fomentations."

Employment is one of the best remedies for terror and grief, both of which I now felt to an extreme never before endured; yet I exerted myself to be useful. My trembling frame

grew stronger, and the hope of relieving pain and preserving life reconciled me to the sight of a visage so indicative of death that I at first recoiled with horror. Before the arrival of the apothecary, though Giles rode for him with the speed of devoted gratitude, we heard our dear patient say she was better: opening her eyes, she blessed her good girls, and expressed sorrow for having alarmed us. Our Esculapius felt her pulse; assured us that all was improving; prescribed a medicine to restore the stomach to its proper tone; enjoined the strictest quiet, as on that every thing depended; and taking Ellen aside, commended her exertion and presence of mind, without which this would have been a lost case.

Every injunction was faithfully obeyed. Ellen insisted that we should

all go to bed while she watched, lest, having a companion, she should be tempted to trangress rules and talk. My grandmother's hand pressed my head in the act of benediction, as she bade me go to sleep and think no more of her.

But I did think fondly and anxiously; for, much as I felt the sameness of Ringrove, the kindness I had there experienced deeply touched a heart not naturally ungrateful. The character of the house, too, from which I had been driven, — my father's subsequent neglect, — the small remittance presented to me from him, — the dreariness of my future views, — all rushed upon my mind. I blush to say I was still so selfish that I cannot ascribe all the tears I shed to affection for that friend whom I had just seen snatched from the arms of death, or to sympathy

in her sufferings. Part of these tears were owing to concern for myself. Were she to die before I became established in life, where should I find a home or a friend? A burst of hysterical grief followed this sense of destitution, and my sobs soon drew Ellen on tip-toe, and, scarce daring to breathe, to my chamber.

"Dearest Emma," whispered she, "you must command your feelings; much as I honour your grateful attachment. I see how you love this inestimable friend. Is she not, at least, equally dear to me? yet I dare hardly breathe a sigh. I think too much of her danger, should the spasms return in her now exhausted state, to allow myself that indulgence. Blessed be Heaven, she has fallen into a gentle slumber; but should she hear you, she will think you are ill; the slightest

agitation will be dangerous; her feelings, my love, are most acute; notwithstanding her fortitude, she never will give them utterance; and thus they prey upon her health; all this proceeds from concealed distress."

"Concealed distress! Ellen, what can my grandmother have to afflict her? She leads the life which she says she prefers; her household goes on smoothly; she has out-lived anxious cares for her future lot; and she is always so calm, lively, and good-humoured, that, as I never heard her talk of troubles, I never conceived that she could have any."

"Few people have more, Emma; and not to divulge what I know she has determined to conceal to the last emergency, let me ask you, has she not survived all that she best loved? Has not her once ample fortune been

reduced to a narrow pittance, which necessarily binds down her most truly generous spirit to rigid economy and anxious self-denial? Is she not childless in her old age, with no other support than — shall I, dear coz, say, — two orphan girls who look to her to learn fortitude and receive protection? Infirmities increase upon her, and there is one — lameness, which threatens helplessness. This I know; she feels these to be evils; and blended with thankfulness for the blessings still vouchsafed, her earnest requests to be supported under her trials, and not forsaken in her gray hairs, form part of her daily supplications."

"I wonder she never enters on these subjects with us."

"She spares our feelings, Emma, and would not have us suspect that she considers us to be cares as well as

comforts. Besides, her true humility makes her so grateful for the blessings she still enjoys, that she would esteem it almost impious to dwell on personal inconveniences. It has always been her custom to think more of her failings than of her deservings. As to her good deeds, she seems to me so little to regard them as absolutely to forget them, instead of keeping an inventory in her memory ready to be introduced into her conversation. While conversing with us I know she highly values the innocent vivacity of youth; and finds it too exhilarating to herself, as well as beneficial to the activity and energy which the morning of life requires, to wish to cloud our joys by egotistical melancholy; and when she mixes in society, she regards the company as fellow-pilgrims, each laden with a sufficient burthen of 'own dis-

tress,' and not wanting an addition. Complaint, she says, if reiterated, fails to excite commiseration; and even real affection is worn out and become callous from eternally listening to the tick of the death-watch."

"But, dearest Ellen, if she should die, what will become of me? I have no other home."

Ellen looked displeased and answered, "Nor I either."

"What then can we do?"

"Do all we can to save *her*, and trust the event to Providence."

"Ellen, I have not your philosophy."

"It is not philosophy, Emma." Her head dropped on my shoulder, and her tears flowed in a copious but silent stream. I wrung my hands in anguish.

"Emma," said my cousin, "if you make yourself ill, what can I do with-

out your services? Remember how useful you were to me in the moment of extreme danger; you will be equally so in cherishing weakness which I trust is now all we have to fear."

Selfishness again warped my better feelings. "Ellen," said I, "if my grandmother should be taken from us, you can make your way in the world; you are so industrious, so adroit, so uniformly useful, that many will rejoice to have you live with them; whereas I can hardly take care of myself, and am sure I could not assist others."

"Why not, my dear? If you admire these qualities, why not assume them?"

"Oh! nature has denied them."

"But application will vanquish the 'thrifty goddess.' See, Emma, you can measure out this mixture and drop this tincture as correctly as I do. Even bodily weakness may be remedied,

though not subdued, by the well-applied energies of an active mind. I am sure at least that yours is of too noble, too enlarged a character, to stoop to the degradation of imbecile dependance or impious despondency."

I laid my head on my pillow and tried to be composed. Ellen left me for a few moments, and returned with a more assured countenance. "She sleeps serenely," was her remark, "and her pulse strengthens. Bridget has lain down on my bed, and I will share yours; not your bed only, but your fortunes. And now, my dearest coz, clasped in each other's arms, and dear to each other's hearts, let us trust in Divine Protection. Who shall dare to call us desolate orphans?"

This soothing kindness proved the best opiate. I awoke early, refreshed and calmed, and immediately joined

Ellen at the bedside of my grandmother. She was sitting up, taking refreshment which her active nurse had already procured. "You are pale and woe-worn, my dear child," said she, extending her hand, "but I hope not from indisposition." I spoke of my alarm for her danger. "But that," she answered, "has for the present subsided, and the shadow should not terrify when the giant is retiring. You must call back your smiles, for cheerfulness is so natural an expression of gratitude, that I doubt the existence of such a sentiment when a sombre face refutes verbal acknowledgements. You know who says, 'to enjoy is to obey;' and if we supply as a parenthesis, 'with moderation' (and, indeed, without this there can be no real enjoyment), the remark is correct."

I tried to comply with her wishes,

and was allowed to sit by her and minister to her feebleness, while Ellen went to the discharge of her many duties, which the indisposition of an old woman must not, Mrs. Loveday said, suspend. Reading, she added, would suit her better than conversation; but her present weakness prevented her from long fixing her thoughts on high and holy themes, and only permitted short but fervent aspirations. Being allowed to choose that which would amuse me, and to which she would occasionally attend, I resorted to that repository which was now become a favourite study, and selected the following essay.

"*The Improver.*

"'Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood —
The source of evil one, and one of good; —
From thence the cup of mortal life he fills —
Blessings to these, to those distributes ills;
To most he mingles both.' POPE's *Homer.*

" The necessity of a probationary existence to a creature so constituted as man cannot be more strongly demonstrated than by considering the change which prosperity or adversity has produced on those who have been singularly exposed to their respective influence. And if we shall find that the blandishments of the former have mostly a deteriorating effect, while the frowns of the latter possess a purifying influence, not only on the individual but on all attentive observers of the changes and chances of this mortal life; a sufficient answer will be given to those cavillers who, pretending that they cannot trace the marks of paternal goodness in the severe dispensations often allotted to worthy people, raise doubts against the existence, or at least the superintendence, of the Deity; doubts that

are strengthened by the prevalence of moral and physical evil, which they hold to be inconsistent with His attributes.

" In the morning of life hope easily scales the hill of difficulty, on whose summit we discern wealth, power, reputation, or whatever other good we ardently pursue. We presume that we shall carry with us those warm affections and generous sentiments which seem interwoven with our natures, and this causes us to identify our own advancement with the good of society. But as the object we pursue is seldom gained till the fervour of youth is past, our affections become chilled by the protracted contest, and our views terminate in those individual or family anxieties which divide us as it were into so many little states, each occupied with its own petty con-

cerns. Nor must we wonder if a man who has had to fight his way to eminence, feebly assisted and vigorously opposed, should feel, even in the moment of triumph, such irritation at unfair competitors or inefficient friends, as to take his rest, with a determination to care as little for the success of others as they did for his own. Perhaps the old nurse whom he intended to pension is dead; or the favourite school-fellow once designed to be his inmate and the sharer of his fortunes has removed beyond his reach, or does not need his kindness, or is become so unlike the lad he loved, that the change exonerates him from realizing the plan. And though, in the fulness of childish munificence, his books and his play-things were divided with his brothers and sisters, he has now a family of his own; he

is very desirous to live with his relations on friendly, hospitable terms; but the world is open for them as it was to him, and, without being invidious, he must remark, they have not made such good use of their advantages. Thus the man of forty slides into the character he execrated at twenty, and is in his turn condemned by the young debutants who have a general invitation to his table, and, (if they be smart men,) attend his lady's routs, and from thence expect from him more essential services than that slice of mutton and glass of wine which are the hard-earned rewards of patient listeners to a great man's trite remarks and stale *bon mots*. Who is there that has looked on life from the observatory of experience, without discovering these modified Hazaels among his acquaintance? Who is there that,

on turning his view inward, and scrutinizing his own heart, can honestly say that the flame of affectionate sympathy burns there as bright and pure as it did, when, pleased with opening life, 'he seemed to love whate'er he looked upon;' and only regretted his want of power to remove from others the sorrows and inconveniences which fellow-feeling then told him, are not more lightly felt for being silently endured.

"I am now addressing the prosperous part of my species, and am willing to look at human nature on its most favourable side. I ascribe their indifference to the wants and sorrows which they once felt, to the bustle and confusion in which men of business, and men of pleasure pass their days; and, like all theorists, I am provoked when I discover that leisure and retirement do not uniformly produce a

more considerate, benevolent character, but often form a practical misanthrope or a capricious humourist,—one whose love for his species sinks into individuality, or whose high self-esteem induces him to believe that every little exertion in behalf of his fellow-creatures requires to be lowered by arrogance or disguised by caprice, lest his benevolence should compromise his dignity. The truth is, whether his lot be cast in retirement, or he mix in society, the prosperous man is ever apt to think too much of himself and too little of others.

"But adversity is less affected by this constitutional disease of fallen humanity. In a probationary world no one can expect always to drink out of the right-hand urn; and 'He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' never dispenses the bitter draught

without somewhat qualifying it with the grateful beverage. Adversity has few adherents, and no flatterers. We consecrate the idol Prosperity with our sackbuts and dulcimers, and then complain that the golden image which we have set up requires us to sacrifice our comforts at its shrine. Did we but consider its foundation, we should find it as insecure as the sandy plain of Dura; and remember, that the firm-minded children of Israel came unhurt out of the purifying furnace, and exchanged situations with those princes and governors who yielded the homage which they conscientiously refused. Had we courage to refrain from varnishing our patron's vices, or to assert our own independence with respectful modesty in the presence of an old uncle Cœlebs, who talks of leaving us a legacy, we should ex-

onerate ourselves from labours of servility and imposed observance, at which the spirit of man must ever revolt, even when from mercenary fear it seems quietly to endure them. We should at the same time confer inestimable advantages on those to whom we showed ourselves capable of becoming faithful friends and kind assistants, by proving that we are made of materials which cannot be modelled into slaves or parasites.

"To prove how necessary is discipline to fallen man, let us contemplate the few on whom the rich robe of prosperity is admitted to sit gracefully, and we shall find them to be those who, born to the eminent station they now adorn, do not consider it as an elevation, and may rather be called great than prosperous; or on those who, during their march to distinction,

preserved a calm reflective spirit, and a forethought of the uncertain tenure by which they must eventually hold the good to which they aspired. In the former case, these instances of a happy accordance of high station and amiable manners occur, when, by assiduous early culture the understanding has been opened, and the affections trained to meet the trials and fulfil the duties imposed upon them; and the advantages of discipline admonish, in their moral superiority, the neglected, ill-educated, mis-governed sons of affluence, who have never felt the curb, or experimentally known that man is born to sorrow. And as to those whom honourable industry has conducted to wealth and fame, through the paths of science, literature, art, or business, with hearts unpetrified and minds uncontracted;—

the collision of similar talent, enterprise, and desert, now goading them to exertion, now repressing those excesses which, when unchecked, become encumbrances, formed their manners under the bracing influence of equalized society; the freedom of which acts upon the character with the like refreshing effect that a northern climate produces upon the body; and while this influence is preserved, prosperity will fail to enervate them.

" It is wrong to infer that we are to expect most from those who have most to bestow, and have fewest calls on their benevolence. Yet, dupes to vanity, if not to avarice, we all think our own consequence increased by appearing in a great man's train; and the smiles and nods which we have received from lords and nabobs are as carefully recorded among our valuables as if they

were gems or ingots. Why take such pains to increase our own disappointments, and to bait the lime-twigs of Satan for our neighbours' souls? We are continually complaining of the unequal distribution of fortune's favours; while, by our erroneous estimation of their value, we perversely load the scale that diminishes our own weight in society. Why is every thing said or done by great people deemed so very wise, good, and witty, that we repeat their common-places, and forget that we heard them from our nurse? Why do we blush at being reminded of a friend who is unfortunately classed among the poor or ungenteel at a moment when we are elbowing our way into high company; and how dare we complain of the arrogant assumptions of greatness, when we daily sacrifice friendship, principle, gra-

titude, and affection, rather than incur its frown or provoke a sarcasm on the uncomplying rigidity of plebeian manners. Prosperity has its temptations; but let no man condemn the prosperous for yielding to them, who has not courage to stand upright in a great man's presence. The existence of a tyrant presupposes that many were willing to be slaves; and the same baseness of mind which submits to undue compliances, not only re-acts on those who in its present contracted sphere are subjected to its influence, but, in the event of future elevation, makes them counterparts of the despots they have served. Thus the chagrin which lordly hauteur or negligent coldness excited in the place-hunter's breast, is diffused over his domestic circle, and a new race of place-hunters are exposed to the same corroding in-

fluence by the new great man's bad copy of a bad model. But can we charge these miseries on Him who sent us into the world 'to do our duty in *that* station of life to which he thought fit to call us?' and who, though he does not interdict us from taking a higher seat at life's banquet, enjoins us to wait till we are invited so to do by the master of the feast.

"Like other examples of real heroism, an instance of true wisdom in preferring domestic respectability to supervenient appendages may be found in Holy Writ; and, to the honour of our sex, it is told of a woman, who, abounding in the patriarchal wealth of the early ages, lived retired in dignified simplicity, yet not unobservant of the Prophet Elisha, for whose wants she provided, or rather anticipated them, with more than courtly delicacy, by

furnishing a chamber for his repose, and a table for his refreshment, whenever he passed by her dwelling. Grateful for her hospitality, the man of God sought to requite it, and offered her those distinctions which are generally desiderata to rural opulence. But only the words of Scripture can do justice to the Shunamite's character. 'Behold,' said the Prophet, 'thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among my own people.'

"As the time-serving humour which prompts this degrading attention and base adulation tends to corrupt prosperity, so do the neglect and reproach which adversity meets from wordly minded people increase its discomforts;

and in both cases the inequality of our present state is aggravated by those who complain loudest of the distributions of Providence. The time of a man's sinking in the world is often chosen to convince him of errors which an excoriated sensibility then renders him peculiarly unwilling to remember; but of these possibly his monitor never thought while his affairs wore a promising aspect. How often is a request for assistance repelled by a reference to neglected opportunities; and the consequences of past indulgencies enumerated, till every indiscretion is magnified into an unpardonable crime. This is done to justify a predetermined refusal, not to reform the culprit; its object is to exonerate the monitor for the neglect of unpleasant or expensive duties, not to stimulate the unfortunate to spread

his arms and struggle against the tide of ill-fortune, in the conviction that he has friends who sympathise in his troubles and will encourage and assist his efforts. Determined to make our lives a scene of exhilaration instead of an arena of moral exercise, we shrink from the contact of unhappy people; and this not so much because they may ask favours, as because the sight of them wounds our feelings and awakens a painful consciousness that we hold our good things by a frail tenure. Thus it is that when a friend is ruined we blame his imprudence as the cause of his distress; if he meet with an accident, we charge him with carelessness; and if he die, we censure his medical attendants, who mistook and ill-managed his disorder. And yet we read, and in the abstract admit, the maxim, that 'man that is

born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.' Surely, with this conviction, it would be wise, before the destroying angel smites our dwelling, to look abroad and witness how others are affected by his ravages. Something may be learned, either to recommend patience or to subdue complaint. We may administer consolation to the sufferers by our presence, which our purse (could we afford to offer it) would not purchase. And besides exciting our immediate gratitude for every present comfort, we may learn, when required to resign them, that their resumption by the Donor is no peculiar infliction, but is the common lot of all the race of Adam, who in their successive generations were like us, stewards of the good things of this life, and have been respectively summoned to surrender

the charge and to give an account of their stewardship.

" Convinced that the predominant errors of the times arise from levity and dissipation rather than from parsimony or inhumanity, vices which, to use the most degrading term, are now unfashionable, consideration appears to be in this case synonymous with improvement. I do not believe that we ever pay undesigned homage to prosperity; but trust that when we gall the tribes of adversity, the offence is often unintentional. Self-love, which in the former instance stimulates us to be agreeable to people who may be of use to us, in the latter urges us to escape from what is disagreeable; or, if we must witness it, blunts its impression. We are acute in anticipating what the great man will expect; we do not stop to reflect

upon what the wretched feel; and yet the nerves of the latter, attenuated by anguish, are still more sensitive than those of the favourite of fortune, who, rendered fastidious by indulgence, feels inclined to 'chide the winds for visiting his face too roughly.' Prosperity has many amusements to occupy its attention. If adversity be called to labour, this exertion does not preclude thought; and there is an accusing spirit always at hand, unfolding a scroll of slights and insults, imaginary perhaps as the Gryphons of old, but, like them, painted with fiery stings and talons of steel. I praise not the man who abandons his mind to these chimeras; for to be subdued by sorrow is not to be improved by correction. The captive of despair is not the object on which the gods of heathenism were said to look with benignity; nor

does that dark dungeon lie in the Christian pilgrim's heaven-directed path. But I invite those who indulge in the luxury of sentimental grief or maudlin self-pity to reserve some of the sympathy which they lavish on people who never did nor could exist, on sufferings not only insupportable but happily impossible, — and on their own sorrows whether pre-existent or impending, and apply their tender feelings to the case of those whose countenances betray the corroding hand of real anguish, or whose appearance bespeaks an ineffectual struggle against the devastating inroads of misfortune.

" But of all the offices which our relative situations call upon us to perform to each other, there is none more difficult to practise with success than that of comforter. To stimulate our exertions

for the efficient discharge of that office, let us remember that the appellation in its highest use is divine, and assumed by Him who is the 'Searcher of Hearts,' as well as 'the God of all Consolation.' We do not pretend to the first denomination, as it relates to our neighbour; but it is within our capability, and most strictly our duty, to examine and purify our own intentions, especially when, as an exercise of good works, we visit the house of mourning. We must not go in the spirit of Mrs. Plaintive, that we may have a melancholy story to discuss at the card table; and to receive compliments on our philanthropy, with eyes turned heaven-ward, but with hearts enslaved to vanity. There was little real worth in the attentions which one of my kindred showed me when my husband died; or in her nursing me during

the long indisposition that ensued; for she had long envied my happiness, and at first believed me a ruined widow; then afterwards hoped that I would leave her my fortune. But when she found that I recovered, and was richer than herself, she coulde nver endure my company. The breach was final; and many persons condemned me for ingratitude, as she piques herself on her adroitness in a sick room, and affirms that an infallible nostrum which she secretly administered saved my life. An envious person may render the offices of humanity, and really compassionate you when in deep affliction; but with returning comfort the regard entertained by such persons will subside. I should therefore rank them, though among the most frequent, not the most praise-worthy visitants of the house of mourning. 'I do not court

the acquaintance of Sir Fusswell Grand-style,' said a friend of mine, who possessed every earthly blessing except competence; 'he is generous and hospitable; would cram me at his table; load me with the produce of his farm and garden; and send me home with a face rendered as rubicund and full of hilarity as his own by compotations, which he calls driving away care. But then I must previously accompany him in a tour round that farm and garden, observe and admire every thing, even to the last indispensable superfluity which fastidious want has added to his furniture. He forgets that I have neither acres nor money-bags to prevent care from stepping over my threshhold again in the morning; and that my study is to curtail real wants which appear more craving from the contrast of uncontrolled expenditure.'

" It was once my lot to travel with two females, who might have sat for portraits representing the enjoyment of success and the endurance of misfortune. The ruddy countenance of my left hand neighbour seemed distended by overflowing good, but it was not self-important or repulsive; and her rich travelling dress and gem-adorned fingers corresponded with her physiognomy. The passenger opposite was a woman about the same age; pale, dejected, and plainly attired in deep mourning. I was not long left to speculate on this striking contrast. The joyous lady was as garrulous as prosperous, and soon acquainted us with her history, which, as might be inferred from her appearance, comprised the rapid acquisition of a large fortune from a small beginning. And if ' to take our ease, to eat, drink, and

be merry,' be the duty of those 'who have much goods laid up for many years,' never did a superflux of good things seem better bestowed, or on one more aware of the extent and immunites of her possessions. Allow me to enumerate them in her own words. She had the best husband in the world, the finest family of children, the most trusty clever servants, the most exemplary governess, the pleasantest country-house, the most tasty and withal productive garden, a farm admirably managed, and a dairy in the worst seasons most immensely profitable. The coach went a little on one side; she begged us not to be alarmed, she had never been overturned in her life, though she had been a great traveller; and her good fortune was to operate as a similar security

against robbers, for she had never been attacked by footpads or highwaymen.

"After thus exhausting general topics, she proceeded to gratify maternal partiality, by descending to particulars, giving us a description of Augusta's beauty, improved by a velvet trimming painted by herself, which eclipsed every body. She then favoured us with specimens of her boy Alexander's wit. Our hitherto silent companion now raised her eyes, and asked the talkative lady if her children enjoyed good health. 'Always,' was the answer. Doctors and nurses were unknown in her family. The daughter of affliction gave signs of hysterical emotion, while the good humour with which our other fellow-traveller attempted to relieve her, by now holding a frosted-silver box scented with attagull to her nose, and then offering a diamond-

cut pocket cordial glass, charged with the best Nantes, gave me a higher opinion of her character than the overflowing felicity of her communications had hitherto inspired. She had indeed a tear for pity, and she listened with commiserating attention to a narrative the reverse of her own, but which seemed to relieve the speaker's 'overfraught heart.' In birth, education, and circumstances, at their outset in life, I judge that they stood on an equality; and if the mourner had not also the best husband in the world, neither her look nor her words indicated a reproach on his conduct, when she said that every thing went wrong with him. They had tried various schemes of business, and at last entered on a laborious one: their utmost hope was to get a living, and, if they did, they should be thankful. She had been the

mother of several children; all had died young but poor John. She now wept so abundantly, that it was impossible to withhold a sympathising tear. He lived to be her greatest comfort, — to be all she could wish him; but one day he fell from a load of hay (this was when they first became cow-keepers), injured his spine, and never recovered. For two years he lay on the bed of hopeless anguish, a grievous sufferer. His temper, once peculiarly gentle, became at last querulous; but still it was her only comfort to attend upon him, and she doubts not he is gone to the heavenly mansions. 'Mother,' he would say, 'bear with me; I grow peevish. Dear mother, it will not be long that I shall want you.' And so it proved, for the severe frost carried him off; and ever since she had been confined with a

rheumatic fever. But she rejoiced to think she had been spared to attend on poor John to the last. She concluded her narrative by saying, she was going into the country among her husband's relations, to recover her health; but they were strangers to her, and she feared to be troublesome if she talked of her sorrows. These we found were not limited to maternal affliction, though that was the absorbing woe. A disease broke out among their cows; dairy produce declined in price; and they had suffered severe losses even amongst their swine. My left hand companion caught the word, and the self-gratulating egotism of her character, which compassion had suspended, broke out anew in her eager remark: 'Oh! you should get some of our breed: my roasting pigs are the admiration of the county. I will send

you one when you come back to London: you never ate any thing so delicious.' The mourner was silenced, certainly not comforted, by an observation which placed their different lot in such full contrast; and if the tears which streamed yet faster down the grief-worn channels in her face, proceeded from a momentary remission of that unquestioning patience which marked her countenance, I trust the misgiving doubt of the righteous distributions of Providence was pardoned. But I could not speedily forgive the thoughtlessness of full enjoyment, which, unsatisfied with drinking largely of the right-hand cup, must display its sparkling contents in full opposition to the bitter potion of grief, sickness, anxiety, and poverty. And feeling too angry to be further amused with the details of animal happiness,

I communed with myself, and reflected on its brevity. I know no more of my fellow-travellers; but have often occupied myself with prefiguring their future fortunes. Many years have since past; and as they were then in the decline of life, probably the same event has happened to both. But to which of the two will this world have best fulfilled its probationary office — to her whose every wish was gratified, or to her whose last delight died with her suffering child? One we may suppose to have passed into eternity, with affections weaned from what she has left, and expectations of recovering what she has lost; not to mention a long-desired liberation from anxiety and care, and a release from duties which she could hardly perform. The other, enchanted with her earthly heritage, would perhaps anxiously desire

the re-edification of her decaying tabernacle, whose ruin she would contemplate with horror, and, like 'the Lady' in the good old song, desire Death to remove the victims of affliction, and spare her to see her children and grandchildren established in life, and pursuing the same prosperous course as herself. I am inclined to think that the difference of such feelings, during the premonitory diseases which generally conduct us to the grave, are sufficient to counterbalance what is termed good or bad fortune, in the rare occurrence of a life spent in uninterrupted ease and pleasure, and another as singularly marked by a continuance of sorrow and misfortune.

"As adversity possesses not only the property of reconciling us to that grand catastrophe of human exertion which we know to be inevitable, but also, if

rightly improved, that of preparing us for it, let us neither misuse its correctives, aggravate its burdens, nor annoy its victims. On the two latter heads, as more particularly corresponding with the subject of this essay, I would suggest a few more remarks. Scripture does not authorize us to subscribe to that system of poetical justice which is become so popular. Prosperity is not necessarily a proof of God's favour, or the test of virtue: adversity is not always the scourge of vice, or a mark of divine displeasure. A man often amasses a considerable fortune, with no other good qualities than industry and prudence; another, with even these worldly virtues, may fail in all his designs. He may possess talent, but be fixed where the beams of patronage never shine: a blockhead may outstrip him in the race of fame;

a knave may supplant him. He may be calumniated, misrepresented, ill-advised, mistaken. There is no crime in all this; and if he bear his ill-fortune respectably, there is no shame. He may labour under some personal infirmity: he may suffer from ill-health: his manners may have some uncouth peculiarity: he may be too independent or too careless to be what is called a pleasant companion. In all this there is nothing reprehensible. Say that he is unhappy from having disgraceful connexions. Is he to be censured? unless, like Eli, he only gently reproved when he might successfully have restrained; or, like David, by his own conduct familiarised his kindred with vice, or neglected the positive command of training his children in the habit of early obedience to the law of the Lord.

" Though 'amusement reigns man's great demand,' nothing is less certain than that this is the prime purpose of life; neither is it true that unfortunate people are bad company, or that a visit to the house of mourning is the precursor of *ennui*. The dwelling of those who grieve is not always filled with whiners and grumblers: our minds may receive agreeable impulses from other sources than gaiety; and what does not exhilarate may improve. Ask the votaries of dissipation, if a perpetual pursuit of entertainment be successful; if wit do not grow vapid, mirth become fatigue, and novelty flatten into sameness by perpetual reiteration. By way of variety, bend your steps to the avoided abode of distress; and that not always as a benefactor who comes to distribute a largess; but as a friend, interested in its con-

cerns, and appreciating its trials. Let the afflicted hear from you, not the voice of reproof, nor always of instruction, — but of sympathy, and, if truth will permit, of commendation: at least, be as sincere in your praise as when you caress Lady Greatenough's spoiled child, or talk of the pleasant days you passed at Mrs. Stately's, where (in truth) you sat silent and disregarded, playing with your fan, and commending the elegant furniture. The Divine Founder of our religion is recorded to have said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' Of silver and gold your lot may be scanty; but that which you have, impart. Smiles and kind words are in your power; obliging attentions will only cost you time; and at the great audit you will find it in this instance well laid out. Even an encouraging look is valuable to

depressed modesty; and be assured, that a day in which your mind has been fully set 'to bind up the broken-hearted,' 'to see that such as are in need and adversity suffer no wrong;' in which you have assisted infirmity, defended the weak and diffident from the tyranny of conversational oppression, directed a ray of hope to despair, mitigated the ills of poverty, and given a cheerful hour to sorrow, will always be recollected with satisfaction; while the participation of a gala that was purchased by any sacrifice of duty, consistency, or propriety, will be followed by regret.

"Nor yet consider yourselves exonerated from the performance of these acts of kindness, because the shades of human infirmity gather round the dwelling of sorrow. They are incidental to the climate, but they carry

no contagion. Peevishness, discontent, and envy, are repulsive faults; not like the painted and gilded sins, the amiable vices, and gentle frailties, which, like a pestilential vapour, hover over the fertile valley of prosperity. You will probably be induced to guard against the first temptations to those faults, by observing how they aggravate misery; while the sublime principles of patient resignation soften its asperity. At least, you will learn to bear your own petty disappointments better, by reflecting on what your fellow-creatures are constrained to endure; while, by a voluntary subjugation of your evil propensities, you render the correcting chastisements of Providence less necessary. Above all, remember, that some of the numerous methods by which prosperity is acquired are so incompatible with

the divine command, that success must be a punishment which will sooner or later disclose its concealed sting.

" Adversity, as I have before said, is not always querulous or complaining. It often discloses qualities of the highest value in the eyes of God and man. While we are travelling to a distant unknown country, it seems desirable to avoid associating with those who are in avowed rebellion to its powerful Sovereign, and to carry with us the recommendatory good wishes of his loyal subjects. Acting on this principle, let us regard irreligion and immorality as the contamination which we must avoid ; whether it be partially concealed by ermine and brocade, or exposed to our loathing sight in naked deformity. And, on the other hand, wherever virtue and piety exist, let us view them as qualities which

the King of heaven will in his own good time publicly honour. When the general practice of society shall conform to these rules, many impediments to its happiness will be removed. Pride and arrogance will be cast down by acclamation; vanity and ostentation will be annihilated; for the former cannot tyrannise without slaves, nor the latter exist without parasites. Adversity will then appear divested of incidental horrors; grave and admonitory, but not terrific; a liberator to loosen the bonds which tie us to the world, not a bugbear to scare us from an impartial discharge of our social duties. I would even say, that, in such a state of subdued feeling, the kingdom of heaven would be begun upon earth; where the rudiments of those holy dispositions which constitute its pre-eminent felicity must be learned in

the school of discipline, and where our nature is advanced towards perfection, either by enduring sorrow or by endeavours for its relief."

CHAP. XII.

I HAD never before been acquainted with the interior of a sick-chamber. I had heard it described, indeed, in works of fiction; and I well remembered my extreme admiration at the description given by Rousseau of Julia's last illness. It always was my intention to die like that lady, surrounded with vases of flowers, arrayed in full dress, talking a vast deal, and holding a drawing-room on my death-bed, from whence, like her, I determined to banish every thing that was frightful and disagreeable. The realities of pain, languor, and infirmity, when, like the stricken deer, we shun our comrades and seek privacy; when speech, being difficult, is brief; when the intellects

are often clouded or distracted by disease, and the temper is sometimes warped by anguish, I found to be extremely different from Jean Jacques's beau ideal. My grandmother's illness was of brief duration, and terminated happily; but I learned from it many lessons of passive and active virtue. Her calm cheerfulness, meek endurance, and unquestioning submission to the divine will, — Ellen's assiduous duty and skilful ministration, joined to the most heroical self-command over her feelings, taught me what I could never have acquired from the philosophising deist: these were indeed the tenets of a school of wisdom which he had never entered.

While occupied one morning in watching her slumbers, when Ellen was gone into the village, a lady and gentleman arrived at the wicket, with

whom Bridget appeared to be engaged in arduous contention, opposing their entrance. I soon discovered that they were Mrs. Strictly, and Mr. Strain, the popular preacher; who, as we had before heard, was become an inmate at the manor-house, and was on the eve of marrying one of the daughters. I could not catch the enquiries of the visitors, as they were made in very soft low voices; but Bridget's responses were distinct and shrill. "Yes, a good deal better"—"Out of danger"—"Is now asleep"—"The doctor forbids her seeing company"—"No gentleman but Mr. James goes up stairs"—"Mr. James calls every day"—"Good day, ma'am"—"Good day, sir." The complimentary appellatives, I remarked, were confined to the parting speech, and merely struck in when Bridget saw not only that their backs

were turned, but that they were fairly advanced a few steps from the garden.

I hastened down stairs, and found Bridget storming "with all the fury of a cook." "Only think, Miss Herbert, of their impertinence, to come to tell my mistress her duty, for this was their errand. They go from house to house in the village, they look what is in the kettles, and order the poor folks how to dress their dinners; and then they enquire into the state of their souls, and ask leave to convert them to Christianity! as good as saying we are all heathens, and Mr. James is a blind guide. Would you believe it? They actually hinted that he did not do his duty by my mistress; for they asked if she would like to converse with Mr. Strain, who was very willing to render his spiritual assistance. I

longed to say she could tell him his duty better than he could teach her; that she never sat in judgment on other people's souls, nor poked her head into other people's business, nor made strife and discord in families, nor turned part of her own family out of doors, and starved the rest, especially her poor servants."

The crime of being a bad mistress was in Bridget's eyes indelible, and she continued to trace it through its various shades. Locking up the small beer; weighing out the bread; sending out sugar for kitchen use in a tea-cup, and flour in a dredger; giving cast-offs to "nasty hussies," who came piping and crying with brats in their arms, and pretending to be penitent; making her household sit hour after hour listening to strange preachers, when every servant was tired with hard

work; cutting up fine rumps of beef to regale those said preachers; and expecting the poor servants to dine next day on broth made from the bones. These and other treasonable offences against the majesty of the household lares had hardly been enumerated, when Ellen returned; and she too had her cheek flushed, her hair not a little disordered, and fire in her eyes. Her step was quick, so was her style of speaking, and she seemed out of breath: in short, my fair cousin had all the symptoms of being in a passion.

"What is the matter, Ellen? what can have occurred? You seem very angry."

"No, I am not angry, only I cannot endure impertinence, and the arrogance that masks itself under the pretence of extraordinary goodness. They asked

such insulting questions, and gave such stinging hints, and all in such undertones, and with such affectionate looks and beseeching smiles! But, indeed, Emma, I should hardly have been so provoked if I had even heard drunken Dick, the greatest vagabond in the parish, abuse my grandmother."

"But of whom are you talking?"

"The lady of the manor, and her intended son-in-law. He has acted as I said he would, made choice of Lucy, who has an independent fortune bequeathed by her grandfather, besides what she expects from a division of the Ringrove estate, if Mrs. Strictly can succeed in disinheriting her eldest son. I met them just now, and they talked of coming hither. Have they been here?"

"Yes, Miss Ellen, but no further than the garden-gate. I held it fast,

and would have died there before they should have got in to disturb and perplex my mistress."

"Excellent Bridget! for this brave resolve I will buy you a new gown next quarter-day, even if I turn my blue poplin a second time."

"No, my dear Miss Loveday, put my new gowns into your own lock-up purse, and do as I do: save a few pence against a rainy day, and don't go on giving every thing away till you have not a shilling to help yourself. Old Bridget is not without a friend in her pocket to buy her new gowns, when she thinks fit to prefer them to those that were her dear mistress's." She walked off with her handkerchief at her eyes, and I again questioned Ellen on her interview with the lady of the manor and her protegé.

"They met me," said she, "at

the Smiths', whom I found they were labouring to incense against Mr. James, with whom, as you know, Richard has just had some altercation on the subject of tithes. Mr. Strain insinuated that he feared our pastor was too secular a disciplinarian, a formalist; and Mrs. Strictly corroborated the charges with her 'ay sure, all this is very wrong.' I bore all with patience, dearly as I love the James's, till the enquiries of these officious friends after my grandmother's health introduced sarcasms which have not even the merit of being original, for they were substantially but revived portions of the harangues which the friends of Job addressed to the afflicted patriarch when he sat among the ashes. Could you believe that, in the shape of general remarks, they implied that her present illness was a

special visitation of Providence, intended to remind her of the danger of her spiritual state, and to awaken her mind to the necessity of conversion? Convert the tried servant of God, who, during a life of above seventy years, has exemplified the practicability and excellence of the precepts which her lips have uttered! I did ask for an explanation of the term, as referring to the conduct of one against whom calumny would not dare to utter a reproach, being conscious that it could not adhere; and Mr. Strain answered, with one of his gentle smiles, in his favourite way of general remark, that morality was not religion; that those who trusted in their good works were self-deceivers, and in a worse state than atrocious offenders, because they lulled their consciences to sleep with the opiate of self-right-

eousness. Such was, he said, the absolute, universal depravity of man, that there was nothing good in him. He had heard, he hoped the report was erroneous, that Mrs. Loveday's views on this subject were dark and temporizing; and also that she tolerated, nay practised, diversions utterly worldly, and therefore opposite to the spirit of religion, and incompatible with the character of a serious Christian. But though he was not void of fears for her, she was (as every one assured him) so amiable a lady, that his hopes predominated; and he should ever offer his prayers that she might be found more than a moral professor. Judge, Emma, my surprise! I was roused by Mrs. Strictly's proposal to make what she called a charitable visit to her neighbour (I rejoice that she

did not say friend), to whose routs and card-parties she had been often asked, but really had no time to bestow on vanities. I answered instantly, that my grandmother was at present too weak to receive company or attend to conversation. 'Poor creature,' said the lady, with a certain convolution of her eyes; 'she is accustomed to a gay life, and must feel this deprivation. It would be nothing to me: I neither read novels, nor play at cards, nor adorn my person, nor indulge my appetite.' And she ran over a list of self-imposed austerities and renunciations, which might have assisted the most austere monk that ever sat in a confessional in his infliction of penance; but all too frivolous to be put in competition with one of our dear patient's daily deeds of love and mercy. I scorned to notice such in-

nuendoes, and sat silent—sulky, if you will; but whatever topic was started only served as a sluice to open upon us a flood of egotism. Some one was spoken of who was then smarting under the lash of calumny: to *that* Mrs. Strictly had been peculiarly exposed; but always endured it with the truest meekness, returning good for evil, and performing the highest acts of benevolence toward those who held her in contempt, and treated her with ridicule. I suppose her call on my grandmother was one of these acts of benevolence; but the sarcasm could only hit *me*, for you know the dear soul was always angry when I laughed at the manor-house proceedings. Well, I have not yet done. Kitty Smith (I do love that girl, Emma) said, with tears in her eyes, that she heard Mrs.

Loveday was so ill, that her groans waked the servants.—Nobody had ever been so ill as Mrs. Strictly. The perspiration had streamed from her arms upon the floor; yet no one had even heard an articulate sound from her lips. 'Not a murmur, or even a sigh, Miss Smith; on my veracity not one! But I claim no merit for this. It was not my own strength,' &c. &c. They soon after went away. I stopped a minute to scold off my spleen, and just to enjoy one laugh with Kitty; not supposing, after what I had said, that they would presume to come hither. Yet they did, and, but for faithful Bridget, would doubtless have impressed on my grandmother the high state of their spiritual barometer, while her own was, in their opinion, below zero."

"They would not have succeeded

in their aims," I answered, "for the powers of her mind are quite unclouded. My seclusion with her has given me ample cause to subscribe to the justice of your observation, that her behaviour proves the practicability and excellence of her precepts. I have adopted your habit of noting down her remarks, and will read to you what I have collected during her illness."

"I will listen with the utmost pleasure," said the delighted girl; "but I do not regret that she had no opportunity of repeating them to Mrs. Strictly. Not the wisdom of angels, clothed in angelic eloquence, and enforced by angelic benignity, would penetrate the obtuse mind of invincible self-applause and cherished prejudice. But let us forget this woman

and her set, and do you fetch your common-place book."

"She observed," I began, "that in times of exemption from persecution, and of assured security to the church as a collected body of Christians, self-denial was evinced not in relinquishing our worldly possessions, or in an alienation from social comfort; but in such an entire submission of our passions and desires to the will of God, as induced us to consider whatever befalls us by His appointment to be ultimately best for us. Be it sickness or health, pleasure or pain, poverty or riches, still we are instructed, when events run grievously counter to our wishes, to regard them not always as punishments, but often as trials for the exercise of some Christian virtue not yet sufficiently cultivated; or as warnings and weanings to assist

our liberation from a too ensnaring and beloved, though often abjured world. The general law of nature (as one of the soundest directors * of the youthful mind informs us) is ease and happiness. Pain and sorrow are accidents or departures from the rule which prescribes that every creature should enjoy existence and cling to life. Suicide is a rebellious violation of this rule, and only resorted to by the human species, among whom it increases with the progress of deism, luxury, pride, and false refinement, especially in young persons; and is one instance of the baleful effects of false indulgence, enfeebling tenderness, and ruinous excitation. We are taught to expect more than this world was ever designed to give; more than it can afford to *all* its inhabitants;

* Paley. See Natural Theology.

more than it ought to give to such a being as man, whose physical, moral, and mental qualities require perpetual discipline; more than a Christian should desire, whose eyes must not be diverted from that country of which he is to be a perpetual inhabitant, by the delights of that through which he is travelling. Can we wonder that an ardent imagination, taught to stray among fairy bowers of bliss, with all its passions heated, and anticipating full gratification, should regard those as morose and dull prosers, if not as bitter enemies, and in neither case worthy of attention, who exhibit views of life as it actually is, and for wise reasons ought to be? Unrestrained by principle, untaught by experience, can we wonder that numbers, even in the morning of life, dash back the gift with disdain, and proudly accuse God

for calling them into an existence which is constituted as a preparation for a glorious immortality?

"'I believe,' continued my grandmother, 'that it was not usual until the present times to hear of mere children attempting self-destruction, long before the developement of that master-passion which tyrannizes over the heart of youth, and drives it to deeds of frenzy. But now, before amorous preference can be disclosed in the bosom, envy, hatred, revenge, pride, stimulate children to rush into their Maker's presence, unrepenting and uncalled. A master corrects his scholar, who, considering himself unjustly treated, determines to quit a base, injurious world. Do we call this a fine noble spirit?—it is the spirit which actuated Catiline. An indulged girl is refused some gratification, and

she suspects that a sister whom she dislikes has been the cause. A plunge into the canal will free her from farther disappointments, and plant undying remorse in that sister's bosom. Another is sent to her chamber, as a punishment for some gross act of fraud or falsehood. All is silent; the punishers grow alarmed; the door is opened; and the culprit is found breathless, suspended from the curtain rod. I have been told of a youth who gained the praise of being a fascinating noble boy, but who was admitted to be so much of what is called a Pickle, that he suffered not the family in which he was an inmate to enjoy one moment of comfort or peace. He was at last sent to a solitary garret, as a prison; but resolved on liberty, and weary of a life thus embittered by disgrace, he wrenched the stanchels

from the window, and a speedy remission of punishment was the only means of preventing him from falling on the pavement a mutilated corpse. His friends prided themselves on his courage, and called him a hero. May British heroes never ripen from such germs! Surely the command of our own passions is the first step to fit us for controlling and directing those of others. Without self-control we may be impetuous, but we cannot be brave. Dreadful and deplorable are the consequences of those strong excitements, those habits of society, which give to youth such dangerous precocity; and devote the period designed for learning how to live, to the exhaustion of life's storehouse of future comfort and joys. Whichever way I turn my eyes, I have seen nothing but disappointment to the pa-

rent and misery to the child. The latter, on entering what he is taught to call the happy season of his life, finds every delight anticipated. The former too late discovers that a curb is necessary; but either knows not how to fix it, or dares not apply it.

"'I have wandered, my Emma: age is garrulous, prone to repetition, and unapt at arrangement: the feebleness of my frame makes my thoughts more than usually discursive. Let me recollect them. I meant, in speaking of sickness, to say, that it is a strong connecting link of social life; that it imposes reciprocal duties; exercises all the kindly affections in those who administer, and in those who endure. It is also one of the initiatory schools in our heavenly education; and, when it does not take its more excruciating forms, may often afford us a partial

foretaste of heavenly bliss, by removing us from the cares, absolving us from the duties, and secluding us from the temptations of life. Yet it requires consideration from those who enter its precincts as visitors; and I have often felt disgusted at the egotism and garrulity of people who come to recommend their nostrums, or to display their virtues. I admit that my illness proceeds from my heavenly Father's will; but I fear I should be as irritable as Job, and perhaps like him might have launched into self-commendation, if any persons had told me that it was a judgment, or had produced their own vigorous frames as an instance of greater prudence in regard to health, or a more assured proof of divine favour. It is not in this point of view that we should consider afflictions, either in ourselves or in others. Scripture warns us against

such uncharitable conclusions. * The laws of the material world are difficult to define, and in some degree hard to reconcile. The moral government of God is still more mysterious. It is enough for us to be assured, that every event will work to the good of those who love and fear Him. Resignation, submission, confidence, and gratitude for every blessing which is still dispensed to us, better beseem the fallen race of Adam, than the arrogance that proudly asks, 'Why are not all things ordered to our wishes?'

"'Among the infinite number of examples which this good book (reaching for her Bible) holds forth for our imitation, two cases of illness have often struck me. Epaphroditus † and Trophimus ‡ at different times attended

* Luke, xiii. 1—5.
† Philippians, ii. 21.
‡ 2 Timothy, iv. 20.

St. Paul on those journeys which he undertook to carry the food of life to a perishing world. Their ministry was useful to him: it was sanctioned by the Spirit of God, who avowedly guided the apostle's migrations. Yet they both fell sick: Trophimus, even while accompanying him when he was conveyed to Rome to suffer martyrdom; and the apostle was compelled to leave him behind, and lose the comfort of his society. And though even the shadow of St. Paul passing over the sick healed their diseases, he was restrained from exercising his miraculous powers for his own comfort, and for the relief of his friends and fellow-ministers. After this, how dare we murmur when God stretches us on the bed of infirmity, and withholds immediate relief? Or how dare we, when we see our fellow-creatures

smitten, call it a judgment upon their sins?

"'We sometimes hear very good people complain of life, and ask permission to lay it down as an intolerable burden. This is oftener the peevish exclamation of spleen, than the petition of confirmed despondency. We ask for death, as did the Prophet Jonah, when our importance is diminished, or when our delights, like his gourd, wither. The Prophet Elijah also fell into this fault, and his case has excited in my mind some improving reflections. It appears from three passages in Scripture,* that the time and manner of his removal from the earth had been disclosed by the Spirit of God, and that there existed a general expectation that he would not die the common death of men, but be

* 1 Kings, xviii. 12. xix. 4. 2 Kings, ii. 3. 5.

removed to heaven without separation from his body. While he awaited this extraordinary change, he was often in circumstances most remote from worldly enjoyment. Fed by ravens, or by a miraculous multiplication of a widow's scanty stores; exiled from all the comforts of social life; flying from the rage of blood-thirsty Jezebel; abandoned by that king and nation, in whose presence he had just exercised the control which God had given him over the elements, by calling down fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice, and rain to relieve a three years' drought: we find, I say, this wonder-working prophet sitting hungry and forlorn in the wilderness after a forty days' fast, and craving to die the common death of men, without waiting for the chariots and the horses of fire. What was the

reason of his impatience? He said, because he had been very zealous for the true worship of God, that Israel had totally forsaken the covenant of the Most High; the prophets were all slain; the altars were broken down; and he, the only remaining faithful worshipper, was pursued with interminable animosity. Such are the views which seclusion, disappointment, and distress are apt to form of society; and it is against these views, no less than against the over-exciting portraits drawn by pleasure and dissipation, that Scripture puts us upon our guard. Mark the manner in which the divine presence was manifested to the organic senses of the Prophet. It spoke not 'in the great and strong wind' which rent the mountain; nor in the earthquake, nor the fire which followed it; but in 'a still small voice.' And that voice, instead

of granting the Prophet's impatient request, or confirming his gloomy views of the corruption of his countrymen, enjoins him to quit the desert, announces to him the impending extinction of the royal race in Syria and in Israel, whose successors he is commanded in a typical sense to anoint, and also immediately to call Elisha to the prophetical office, to make him his companion, and invest him with the sacred mantle. When it had been thus proved to him, by the duties which he was still required to fulfil, that his allotted portion of time had not terminated, — that he continued a soldier of the church militant, fighting under her banner, not a ripe sheaf ready to be gathered into the celestial granaries, — he was lastly informed, that the state of religion in Israel was not so deplorable as he supposed it to

be. He was not the only faithful worshipper; for seven thousand beside himself had never bowed the knee to Baal. Great importance seems to attach to this passage, which convinces me that the view we are apt to take of the religious state of our country is incorrect, and often uncandid. I speak from instances within my own knowledge, when I say that devotion, with many who are most truly devout, is a business carried on so secretly, that, unless their domestic situations require them to act as priests to their families, their prayers are unwitnessed even by their nearest connexions. On the other hand, there are not a few who, ostentatiously precise in their public and private orisons, give cause to suspect their sincerity, by not suffering the spirit of prayer to govern their conduct, to be manifest

in the equanimity of their temper, in the general benevolence of their conversation, in the friendliness, generosity, and self-devotedness of their actions. If we continue envious, discontented, proud, selfish, impatient of contradiction, bent on worldly pursuits, engrossed by pleasure, or absorbed by gain, we visit God in his sanctuary or seek him in our closets to little purpose: at least, so it must appear to the many enemies of godliness. But, as I must ever insist that a little religion, if insufficient to renovate, will at least improve the heart, I endeavour to check my regret at the too apparent faults of those who have acquired the name of devout people, by asking what they might have become, had not some portion of the Divine Spirit been in-

fused to counteract the bad tendency of their natural dispositions.'

"My grandmother took yet another view of sickness. She described it in the words of David, as the valley of the shadow of death, and spoke of herself as having felt its chilling influence under that premonitory impression. She trusted, she said, that it was no token of divine displeasure, if those spiritual supports were denied her of which many boasted; but that her want resulted from different constitutional feelings, or a different interpretation of the divine promises. It was with awe, rather than rapture, that she contemplated an immediate introduction into the presence of her Judge; and though in this world she had suffered much, still there were ties that struggled hard at her breaking heart-strings.

She questioned not the sincerity of those who with the hope and exultation of martyrs put off the body; but she well recollected, that one of the best women of the present age, one whose pen had been most useful and indefatigable in promoting the cause of sound piety, and whose actions had, by consistent uniform goodness, corresponded with her writings, near the close of her holy life had confessed that 'no clear vouchsafements of Divine acceptance were afforded her, but that she still laboured under the infirmities of perplexing thoughts and interrupting cares.' To these she submitted as trials which were best for her, and she died in the calm composure of humble hope.

"'I must,' said my grandmother, 'read to you, from the works of a di-

vine* with whose writings I have lately become acquainted, a description of enthusiasm, which I think may well account for some of that extraordinary excitation, which is said to take place when nature is undergoing the dissevering conflict, wisely designed to be so awful, especially if the demeanour of the sufferer be *expected* to become the subject of posthumous celebrity. It is the more valuable, because the author has been suspected of a leaning to doctrines which are now called, in a peculiar sense, *evangelical*, but which in his pious and temperate pages, most truly deserve that name. 'Enthusiasm,' says he, 'consists in unwarranted ideas of the nature of the relation between us and our Creator. A man of sound mind will cherish no extravagant notions of

* See Venn's Sermons, vol. iii. p. 364.

Divine communications. He will consider his own nothingness, and will form the most lofty conceptions of God, as chiefly manifesting his wisdom by the general rules according to which he directs his administration. An enthusiast, on the contrary, entertains lofty notions of himself, and degrading conceptions of the Deity. He conceives the course of nature is to be regulated with a view to his interest. The sun shines, or the rain descends, according to his occasions. Is he in want? God at once, and in a remarkable manner, sends him a supply. Is he opposed? The judgments of God fall upon his enemies. Is he doubtful upon any question? The Spirit of God reveals it to him. Is he disposed to act in some extraordinary manner? The ordinary rules even of morality must yield to his con-

venience. He and his immediate connections have a peculiar dispensation: they are the particular favourites of God; and all things are to minister to their exclusive good.'

"'Can it be a wonder,' continued she, commenting on this quotation, 'that when the general bent of the age leads so strongly to vanity, notoriety, and strong excitement, such high notions of individual desert should acquire popularity, and assume the name of religious feeling? I wish to speak mildly of those ministers of the church, who seem in their discourses rather to sustain than to discourage such impressions. Most probably their own minds are in the same state of fervid temperature, and they are not insincere, but inflated. Every kind of excitation must be adopted by those who wish to succeed in gaining notoriety.

Soundness of mind, even in religious instruction, would be condemned as wanting the one thing needful. Necessity imposes a stimulus on all who would attract attention. Numbers have their bread to earn; and a kind heart ever leans to the popularity of being an admired interpreter of the word of God, and successful in making converts. But while I admit their sincerity, honour their industry, and all but commend their zeal, I must require for those unpretending, sober-minded pastors, who avoid taking imagination as a guide to duty, and shun all praise but the silent testimony of an enlightened conscience, an exemption from the charge of cold formality. For myself also I must beg, that while they are peopling heaven with converts snatched from the highways of perdition, they will not denounce me

as an alien from the church of God; or try to extinguish in my breast the hope which Watts so beautifully expresses:

'My God! I never long'd to see
My fate with curious eyes;
What bitter scenes are wrote for me,
Or what bright hours shall rise.

In thy fair book of life and grace
May God inscribe my name;
There may it fill some humble place,
Beneath the slaughter'd Lamb.'

"After discussing the vanity and uncharitableness of this self-boasting, my grandmother adverted to the contrary extreme, of concealing even from our dear and confidential friends the hopes and the comforts which we derive from our Christian duties. Mutual encouragement and instruction, would, she said, arise from such conversation, for which the family circle on a

Sunday evening seemed happily appropriated. The recollection that these sentiments were imparted at moments when the speaker, free from all disguise, poured forth the fulness of his heart to confiding affection, were deeply consolatory when death contracted that circle, and the thoughts of the survivors followed the beloved object to regions promised only to Christian faith and Christian obedience. Her tears streamed fast, while she spoke of a son suddenly removed to the world of spirits, who yet was able to employ one merciful interval of unclouded intellect in energetically expressing his firm belief in all the articles of the Christian faith. Pleasant as he had been in life, the Sunday evenings they had passed together rose most bright in her remembrance, and furnished the only consolations

which supported her under this sore bereavement. She instanced also the case of an amiable young woman, affluently married, and endowed with most of what the world calls desirable, whom a violent fever summoned from scenes likely to have entirely engrossed a gay, happy temper. Reason and recollection fled early in the disease; but one rooted habit remained, and that habit was prayer. Morning and evening she was observed attempting to articulate offerings of devotion. Has this world any thing to present in the form of eulogy to the memory of these delightful young persons, both dearly and justly loved, and sincerely lamented, worthy to be compared with the tranquillising conviction, that one died confessing his faith in Christ, the other in the confirmed habit of worshipping Him?

"She regretted that medical men so seldom acquainted their patients with the nature and tendency of their disorders, till the approaches of death had actually begun to impair or disable their mental faculties. In some cases a reason might be assigned from the nature of the disease, when every chance of cure depended upon hope. Sometimes, too, the extreme susceptibility of the nervous system, or constitutional weakness of mind, might justify concealment. 'And, indeed,' said she, 'I do not place much reliance on the prayers and vows which fear extorts during a dangerous sickness. Yet as our church teaches us to deprecate a sudden, that is an unprepared death, and the wise virgins needed to trim their lamps, though the oil was ready, I should lament if any deception as to the probable issue of

my disease were practised on myself, and should be very unwilling (except under the above specified circumstances) to be accessory to it in the case of a friend. I admit that to warn a beloved object not to expect a long continuance in this world is a most delicate and agonizing duty. It is well when the sick person spares the performance of it by subduing all self-delusion, and, during the hours of watchfulness and languor, considering what throes of pain and restlessness indicate, gathering from the looks of friends and physicians intelligence of his actual situation, and preparing, by solemn intercourse with God, for the journey through that dark valley which admits no aid, no companion, except the 'Shepherd of Israel,' that a dying Christian may not stand on the edge of a precipice blindfold, uncon-

scious of danger till plunged into the abyss. *

" ' It has often afforded me both improvement and delight to study the behaviour of eminent persons during their last hours; and indeed no period in biographical memoirs is so eagerly and universally perused as that which treats of *death-beds.* Not to mention those instances in holy writ, when a portion of prophetic spirit exalted the dying patriarch, and enabled him to see the future fortunes of his race and nation; instances of other death-beds have occurred,

> ' When old experience did attain
> To somewhat of prophetic strain.'

The last moments of aged persons, aware of impending dissolution, and prepared to cast off their worn-out

* Nelson on Easter Eve needs no recommendation on this occasion.

bodies; persons who have lived piously and benevolently; who have reflected deeply; and who, preserving calm consciences unscathed by terrific images, retain an unimpaired memory, and bodies rather sinking under natural decay than tortured by severe pain or clogged by paralytic incapacity, offer exhibitions to which we should throng, that we may obtain the nearest glimpse of this mortal putting on a blessed immortality. I here suppose that they are expecting the summons, having prepared for it during the evening of perhaps a life of storms and trials. Folding the hands which have well performed their duties in calm repose, and dispensing from their lips those treasures of divine wisdom already found to be supports in danger, guides in difficulty, and solaces

in sorrow; and now, like Bunyan's Christiana, hearing the summons and the command given to pass the separating waters, they only tarry to express the hopes which sustain them, and to give their parting blessing to those who must soon follow them.'

"I wept while she described behaviour so similar to her own. 'Emma,' said she, 'I did not mean to afflict, though I wished to affect you. I am showing how I desire to be able to deport myself; but I trust that I have now received a respite, and that the angel of death is not yet deputed to call me home. I hope it is because the period of my usefulness has not expired. Circumstances have lately come to my knowledge, which open to me fresh paths of duty; and I do not doubt that the justice or the

mercy of my Divine Task-master will supply me with power to perform the part he allots to me. I dare not, with the confidence of an inspired apostle, say, 'It is better for me to depart and to be with Christ;' and I endeavour to silence those querulous longings after a better world, which arise from feeling the burdens of this press hard upon a failing body. I say, I *endeavour* to do this; for indeed, Emma, human virtues are at best but endeavours against besetting sins. I hope I shall not depart from a rule I prescribed to myself, of not presuming to dictate in my petitions what temporal blessings are best for me; but only so far to suggest my wants as to remind me, should they be supplied, from what source the relief comes; or, should the supply be withheld, to

whose will I owe their continuance. I confess that I am sorely tempted to entreat that the period of my life and that of my usefulness may expire together. Possibly there is some remanent infection of pride in what I cherish as independence; but, as I know not when either my utility or my life will terminate, you can bear witness that I have struggled hard to live, have been a very tractable patient, have taken the prescriptions of my medical adviser, and have conformed to the injunctions of my kind but very arbitrary nurse, who, I see, now enters with an attempt at a frown to awe me into silence, while I am much disposed to continue talking. I dare not disobey her, and so, dearest Emma, good night.'"

"Very well," said Ellen, when I

had done reading, "I see who is the arbitrary nurse, and remember putting up my finger and saying, 'Hush,' when I found you one evening at high coze. But, Emma, if our dear grandmother had actually suffered the infliction of a visit from Mrs. Strictly and her clerical dandy — no shaking of your head, cousin! — in dress, manner, and character, he must be placed in that class — could she, I say, have more truly pourtrayed their pretensions or evinced her own superiority? I must some day attempt to divert her with an account of the Ringrove missionary and his successful enterprise. But I will wait till marriage comes in as a finale to the farce; — no unfrequent termination to the history of those 'who creep into widows' houses, and for a pretence make long

prayers.' I disclaim irreverence and illiberality in this quotation, and own I should not have applied it, had my indignation thoroughly subsided, or my warm temper permitted me to reap all the benefit I ought from what you have just been reading."

CHAP. XIII.

My grandmother's restoration to health was, I believe, expedited by some very pleasant circumstances. On inquiring of an old pensioner who came daily from the village to ask after the very best friend she ever had, the occasion of the merry peal which sounded agreeably from the church, I was told it was because Captain Goodenough was turned into a great squire; and on repeating the question next day, when the melody was repeated, we heard that Madam Goodenough was come down in her own coach and four, with she knew not how many servants in rich liveries.

We found one part of this communication correct, for our worthy neighbour soon paid us a visit, though the reported equipage sank to a hired post-chaise, and a smarter foot-boy than Giles: but even this was such extraordinary expenditure, that it justified the report of a change in her fortune, which was corroborated in her joyous countenance. Mrs. Good-enough only waited to be informed that her much-valued friend was convalescent, before she told us that her dear Frederic was no longer forced to plough through stormy waves for his support. He had accidentally encountered a very wealthy but distant relation, who, struck with his name and pleased with his manners (how rapturously the mother's eyes danced as she spoke!) on inquiry found him to be his nearest of kin, and imme-

diately declared him his heir. The rich relative being also one of the few kind-hearted Singletons, who prefer *seeing* people happy to permitting them to be so after wealth has fallen from their own powerless grasp, immediately settled on him six hundred a year, and added half that sum to his mother's scanty jointure. This, she said, to her was affluence; more would have been a superfluous incumbrance; and since Frederic was now able either to pursue his dangerous but honourable profession, or to follow the dictates of his heart, *she* was perfectly happy. I thought she looked at me very significantly as she spoke, for I was making way for Ellen, who, being taken suddenly ill, left the room.

Six hundred a year certain, nay, in present possession; ample reversionary prospects; the rank and occupation of

a gentleman; and a very agreeable young man! Really, Ringrove would be much improved if he came to reside with his mother, of whom we now saw a vast deal, and who every day rose in my estimation. I thought she grew equally attached to me. Her chief talk was of Frederic, of whom I heard so many anecdotes, proving the manliness, integrity, and generosity of his temper, that, though my zeal for an establishment had much subsided, I was in some danger of falling in love with the man. Ellen was peculiarly occupied with her visits to the village, and with her domestic duties; and when she joined us, she became generally reserved and taciturn. I tried to blame her as not sufficiently thankful for my grandmother's recovery; but there was an illumination of delight in her face

when that topic was alluded to, which repelled the invidious thought. I supposed then that her depression might proceed from being over-fatigued, and I heartily wished I knew how to assist her; but as I really had not her adroitness, and felt extremely interested in Mrs. Goodenough's conversation, I solaced myself with thinking, that I was doing my duty by trying to divert her and my grandmother.

We were very happy even when Frederic was not their theme. They were both intelligent women, whose lives had run a parallel course: both were devout and steady performers of their social duties: both had seen much of life's varied scenes: both were discriminative in their observations and candid in their conclusions. Their friendship had been mutual;

and while young their habits of intercourse had been frequent. In declining life, after having been long separated by marriage, they agreed to settle in the same village, and to spend the evening of their days together. Their reunion took place under the same circumstances of diminished fortunes and of defeated hopes. Mrs. Goodenough's husband had been austere, dissipated, and extravagant. I have been assured that my grandfather was a kind-hearted and worthy man; but that from a peculiar easiness of disposition, ill suited to struggle in what proved to be a severe conflict with a work-a-day world, he had met with many pecuniary trials, and his health and spirits had sunk under them. Thus it became the duty of one wife to conceal and endure, and endeavour to correct her husband's faults;

while that of the other was to try to assuage the sorrows and infirmities of her husband by the often unavailing ministry of watchful tenderness. When the widows spoke of their former partners, my grandmother always evinced a solemn thankfulness that the man she loved was relieved from sorrow; and the gratitude was blended with a holy hope that she should recognize him in a better world. The pious friend, with a recoiling chill, would question whether this last suggestion could be consistent with Christian expectation; and would ask how the blessed could themselves be happy, if conscious of the absence of those whom they hold most dear, when looking through the hosts of the redeemed? My grandmother's answers ever corresponded with her reprobation of uncharitable, presump-

tuous conjectures respecting the spiritual state of others, and the limitation of the mercies of God, whose threatenings, she said, speaking to living sinners, were confined to this state of probation, and were not designed to plunge his faithful servants in unavailing misery. But as to future recognition, though that inference seemed plainly drawn from the nature of Christian promises, like many other primary impressions on the soul of man, it was, as it were, taken for granted in many parts of Scripture. Without consciousness of what we had done, or remembrance of those we had known on earth, how could we preserve identity, or be promised a recompense? Is not heaven always described as a place of social intercourse, and is not a communion "with the spirits of just men made perfect"

included in its rewards? And as to the misery to which Mrs. Goodenough alluded, it was probable, that when our moral sense came to be perfectly purified, and our knowledge of the Deity enlarged, we should become incapable of loving or regretting what was utterly and irreclaimably wicked; and should see such convincing proofs of His righteous dealings, as to lose, in a dutiful zeal for his honour, all painful regret for what Infinite Mercy had failed to justify and save. But this was one of the mysteries into which it behoved us not to try to penetrate; resting assured, that all would prove right, and cheering our darkling steps with the light afforded by the promises of God.

My grandmother was fond of stealing what she called a reverent glance at her future country, and would then

turn her thoughts to the improvement of her present abode. Recurring to her favourite idea, that heaven should be considered as a state rather than a place, and be commenced on earth as far as our frailties and infirmities permitted, she always included rational improving conversation as (next to prayer and praise) amongst the best preparatives for the enjoyments of beatified spirits. The two friends often discussed the habits of society prevalent in their youth, and the improvement of which they are still susceptible, in order to render it truly "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." I had now adopted Ellen's method of writing down all that seemed worthy of preservation; and must remark, that what I thought an interesting discussion on conversation commenced with the praise of those

qualities often deemed subordinate, — good humour and attention.

"I remember," said my grandmother, "hearing a gentleman sum up the virtues of a deceased friend, for whom we were both sincere mourners, by saying, that she never disappointed you in her answers. Certainly no one ever existed who was more ingenuous; more strictly devoted to truth and sincerity; or more inimical to that soothing badinage which tickles our ears with soft words, and inflates our minds with false hopes; while it has so little connection with the speaker's feelings, that on its repetition, he would either deny his own words, or feel astonishment at your ignorance of the laws of good-breeding in affixing any determinate meaning to general civilities. But, if this lady's answers never exposed

us to subsequent disappointments by awakening undue expectations, it is equally true that they inflicted no present mortification. If you sought for information, it was promptly afforded; if you required advice, it was delicately bestowed. Her replies showed that she allowed you a fair field for your talents, by never discovering that her attention went abroad when you were exerting yourself to entertain her; and she took care not to mortify your *distress* by intruding a detail of her own *inconveniences* when your heart was bursting under the weight of *sorrows* which you wished to disclose. It was not that she always relieved you, or gave to a petitioner what was requested; since, though placed in that enviable rank of society which furnishes means to the liberal heart, it is only in the fairy ground of

fiction that those means are so inexhaustible as to be scattered for every one to glean; but it might be said of her as it was of a king whose popular manners preserved him from the odium due to his vices, that she 'could refuse favours with a better grace than others could grant them;' or still more appropriately of his admirable niece, Queen Mary, 'that it was a grief to her to deny; but still the manner was obliging.' To sum up the character of this lady in one sentence, she was a sincere and humble Christian; and as her life evinced the exalted graces which religion commands, and her death manifested the firm hope which it inspires, so her manners were modelled by those injunctions which rescue our faith from the charge of being anti-social, morose, and exclusive; and which, if generally adopted,

would annihilate the discomforts that intrude on conversational intercourse."

Mrs. Goodenough agreed that nothing more conciliates general good opinion than that attention which appears to enter into the interests, feelings, and pursuits of those with whom we associate; and as the exterior habit of bestowing such attention is considered to be the acme of refined politeness, so the real principle is most truly consonant with that crown of all Christian graces, universal charity. It is also the only effectual remedy for that selfishness which is apt to take possession of the best minds if they be left to ruminate on their own sufferings, cares, sorrows, and occupations; or even on their own blessings, which, from being always present to them, become, in their own estimation, the only things of importance. "If,"

said she, "every one were content to please without trying to shine, there is enough of rationality and of ability in the world, to send us home from an evening-party without that feeling of mortification and exhaustion which must ever result from disappointing answers."

"Education," observed my grandmother, "has certainly done much to improve conversation; and with all my predilection for past times, even as an old woman, I am forced to admit, that my own class are much more agreeable companions than they used to be; their minds and memories being better stored with general knowledge, thereby obviating the necessity of recurring to petty scandal, and insignificant detail. Ill-temper, too, which fed on the loves and graces of social life, has certainly been so hunted down by general odium

that it can appear only in disguise; and, if endowed with wit, learning, or ability, be tolerated under the name of singularity, and dub its possessor an eccentric or a humorist. But though a party cannot now be disturbed by a game at *snip-snap*, there is enough of uncourteous feeling in the world to blast the promise of many a pleasant evening; and it behoves each of us to try that plan of individual reformation, which, after all, is in every case the truest patriotism. Having learned the scriptural precepts that prescribe courtesy, let us adopt them as the rule of conduct; and whenever we go into company endeavour to give our fellow-creatures a happy hour. A disposition of this kind has been esteemed worthy of record in describing eminent political characters. One of George the

Second's ministers was noted by the Portuguese ambassador, 'as never interrupting those who spoke to him, being of a mild even temper, and having by long habit contracted much patience, and being also a man of much moderation: good sense and integrity being so acknowledged in him that he had few enemies.' When I hear people asserting their personal claims in company on account of the qualities on which they plume themselves, I think of the sensible remark of Sir Robert Walpole respecting the plea often urged in parliament of what was due to the honour and courage of the British nation. He admitted the remark, but begged gentlemen to remember, that other nations thought they had *their* honour to defend, and that no nation allowed that *they* were deficient in courage. Still the most ex-

quisite colloquial delicacies," continued she, "will be found amongst quiet, well educated people in the middle rank of life, who meet without pretence, and with reciprocal feelings of confidence and regard. The world of fashion, and all who are wholly engrossed by the pursuit of wealth, power, business, or amusement, acquire a restlessness that will not let them wait for the expansion of mind. Their palled appetites are jaded by the eager pursuit of pleasure; their tempers are secretly fretted by disappointments; their taste is polished into fastidiousness by excessive cultivation; and they require piquant stimulants instead of a refreshing beverage. Their lives resemble the quick changing slides of a magic lantern, while that of a contemplative, self-engrossed recluse, consists in the

still enjoyment of the same panorama. Hence it happens, that people accustomed to observe calmly, and to reflect deeply, never feel at home in a fashionable party. They are at a loss to understand why an event loses its interest by being a week old; how an opinion can be understood before it is explained; or how a subject can be placed in a fair point of view until all its circumstances are told. They are surprised to find something which they deem of high importance predetermined by a jest, and an argument that has cost them much pains to arrange, decided by an equivoque; and though politeness suppresses those indications of disapprobation which mortify the stranger into silence, some gentle monitions escape which show that he is out of his sphere, and that the regale in which he desires to

luxuriate can form no part of an entertainment to which people go, not for any real enjoyment of the social affections, but for the purpose of hearing bon-mots and repartees; or, if they can, to utter them. Very fine people, having plenty of conversation, put it into an alembic, and sip the alcohol; we rustics endeavour to eke out our scantier portion by extracting improvement from the lees of an exhausted topic, which the great and gay had long discarded."

"It is possible also to mix with people of distinguished talent," remarked Mrs. Goodenough, "without getting any thing more nutritive than common-place conversation. Persons of literary eminence are naturally influenced by two fears, that of giving a premature opinion, and that of having their sentiments surreptitiously or in-

correctly promulgated. To give a decided judgment respecting a new work, a public performer, or a picture which is likely to be much talked of, — a judgment that *may* run counter to popular taste, — requires a strong nerve and too independent a mind to accord with the general class of cognoscenti, who are not apt to own themselves mistaken or to be unfashionable in their critiques. Hence, if literary discussion ever escape their lips in mixed company, it is confined to a rapturous enumeration of admitted beauties, or a censure of acknowledged faults; and conversation runs into a trial of skill as trite as are the contentions of Virgil's shepherds, and we are sent home giddy rather than gratified. It is still worse when, either from contempt of the company, jealousy of a rival, or dread of an anticipating

collector on the prowl for anecdotes and bon-mots which he intends to publish, genius and taste resolve into solemn taciturnity, broken only by an oracular response, authoritative and watched for as a dictum from the Delphic shrine, but essentially insignificant as the tattle of an Abigail."

"The simple rules," resumed my grandmother, "which our religion requires us ever to place before our eyes, would remedy these evils, which are certainly engendered by the predominating love of the praise of man, a pursuit of notoriety. Determining before-hand to be very wise, very agreeable, very interesting, we destroy that very intention, because, while executing our plans, we think only of ourselves. We never consider how much the art of listening agreeably, that is, with sparkling intelligence not

yawning patience, improves the conversational powers of sensible but modest people; on whom the eye of a favourable auditor acts as a talisman, and unlocks precious hoards. The statesman whom I have just named, was, I doubt not, often rewarded during his life for the patience which has immortalised his memory. The same rule would teach the possessors of classical or mathematical learning, who sit incumbered with their mental riches in the presence of those whom they esteem ignorant people, that many other pursuits and acquirements are necessary, not only for the welfare of the body politic, but for their own peculiar comforts. The sons of trade and commerce, the artisan and the manufacturer, the agriculturist and the architect, nay, even the undesignated cultivator of plain morality and

common sense, occupy stations in society only inferior to poetical talent, professional knowledge, or deep inquiry. If these latter have more largely contributed to the welfare of society by directing their studies to utility and improvement, should such faults predominate in what is justly deemed the best company, need we wonder, if descending to the inferior grade of mere wealth, we see the same weeds which education could not entirely extirpate, or good breeding reclaim, shooting out into offensive luxuriances. The arrogance of rank and birth is generally rendered endurable by the consciousness of the great person that he owes something to himself or to his ancestors, and that there is a line which he cannot pass without degradation. But the man of self-acquired affluence has been too much accus-

tomed to look at that affluence for distinction to suppose that any one who has not a slice of the loan, or a villa in the country, is worth speaking to. I cannot picture a more annoying personification of vulgarity than such a man, endowed with rude health, stentorian lungs, unsubdued by affliction or disappointment, and a temper joyous, obtrusive, and arrogant. But let us escape from the chuckle of his self-gratulating laugh, the triumphant wink of his eye, the swagger of his gait, and the swing of his cane, to depict his lady and her daughters. As the external symbols of taste are easily acquired, the little great are no longer distinguished by gaudy flaunting paraphernalia, but rather by habiliments studiously expensive. If you sit near them, they will glance at your attire, and inveigh

against cheap shops, flimsy silks, and English laces. From asserting that the best of every thing is always in the end the cheapest, and propounding other aphorisms equally impracticable to one who must make her five pounds supply the place of their fifty, they will go on to detail the comforts that people now want, taking care to inform you that they possess them. You will find them intolerant of every thing that is mean, and great patrons of liberality; but get them to define the word, and you will perceive that they mistake it for expence. If you name people who have not amassed, and even do not desire to amass riches, they look at you with astonishment, and suppose you are describing the inhabitants of another planet. I have heard them ask what such persons are about, and why they were born.

May we not as well expect conversation from a service of plate packed in a closet, as among these animated representatives of the mines of America? But," continued my grandmother, looking round, "importance is a Proteus, and whatever be its shape, it inflicts a paralysis on the graces of conversation; and as my good friend and myself seem to have practised it on you girls, fetch the Tatlers, Emma, once more, and read me my favourite essays *, in which different characters are described in conversation as musical instruments, and try if the concert will not inspire you to interrupt our duet."

The allegory pleased, and induced Ellen and me to attempt imitative descriptions; chiefly taking our prototypes from the animal creation. We talked of shriek owls, who represt energy by de-

* Tatler, Numbers 153. 157.

stroying hope; of foxes, ever on the watch to seize you for their prey, or to make some sly turn that will conduce to their own advantage; of cuckoos, who drown the finer tones of the mental concert by the interrupting iteration of trifling remarks; of ravens, who have foreseen and predicted every public and private calamity, but, "like Cassandra, prophesied in vain;" of prosers and echoes, who consume an evening in repeating long, dull, digressive tales, trite remarks, and stale jokes; of bears in boats, who can do every thing better than any body, and who know every thing but good manners. The most offensive of this species call themselves Joan Blunts or John Bulls; and, privileged by their title, claim a right to be intolerably impertinent, by giving you a public lecture. We alluded to dancing bears, who play the

buffoon for your amusement, and of bear-leaders who show them off, and think them astonishingly clever; of jackdaws who clamorously devour the conversation, pecking at every subject, and flying to another till all are destroyed; of satyrs who awe delicacy into silence, lest it should utter any thing that could be tortured into an offensive equivoque; of monkeys, who, for malice or mischief, are eternally pelting at reputations; of snakes creeping in tortuous windings to infuse the poison of pernicious principles; and of pewets whose sole aim is to lead you astray by mystifying their *own* purposes, while they narrowly watch all *your* proceedings.

The senior ladies were amused by our amplifications of these sketches, and in their turn gratified us with portraits of former days. I was par-

ticularly amused with Lady Rufflecap, the great person of a small assembly, with an immense train, a high *toupée*, a large ivory fan, and a gold snuff-box, presiding over her subject demesne as queen of the revels, and as judge of decorum. The beaux passed in array before her at every assembly, and not one *country lady*, scarcely a *town girl* would dance with any whom she had not pronounced to be *unexceptionable* men. She acted as counsel, jury, and judge, in all the district courts of honour; she determined what girls ought to do, and what people they might visit; and woe to the sprightly lass who ventured beyond the circle sanctioned by her permissive fiat. She fixed the monthly balls, regulated the card-tables, prescribed the stake, assorted the cakes, and inspected the sandwiches. She also took possession

of the principal tea-equipage; and every one received a lift in gentility proportioned to the quantity which they had swallowed of her hyson. Listless fell the arm of Tweedle-dee, silent was the merry tabor, motionless stood the dancers, if a bad partner at whist, or a rheumatic shoulder, induced Lady Rufflecap to rise, and moving along in stately majesty to pronounce the affecting warning, that "pleasant as the party was, she must observe that it grew late." Sometimes she extended her tyranny to the direction of dinners, the wardrobe, and the conversation of all her subjects. To borrow a now hacknied phrase, from "such thraldom the freedom of the press has happily relieved us."

With her, the Aunt Betties and the Aunt Janes of olden times have nearly disappeared. Spinsters who, out of a

small modicum, contrived to save enough to make themselves of consequence to dependent nieces, and who spent their lives in a conflict between pride and penuriousness, fearing nothing so much as an indignity offered to the family to which they professed to belong. It was necessary to invite them every where, and to give them the uppermost seat where they visited; stiff in their antique brocade, talking of their early conquests, and frowning on the poor lasses who chanced in their turns to hold the place of humble cousin in their suite. These were alternately trembling at the vinegar aspect of their patroness, and tittering with their young acquaintance at their display of antiquated vanity, especially if their own preferred Strephons, either to quiz or to conciliate, attempted to propitiate these venerable graces by

the grateful incense of flattery and attention to their charms, while they sat erect in their chairs like a broken idol in a dilapidated pagoda.

"Yes," said my grandmother, exultingly, "they are all gone. Society is purified from these minor evils, thanks to improved cultivation, and to more liberal feelings. Omens, dreams, lying wonders, repeated (I should rather say invented) to bestow consequence on the narrator, the groans of the valetudinarian, and the singularities of unchecked caprice, are also banished with the sweeping interdiction of being ungenteel. Conversation has been essentially improved by removing the restraints once injuriously imposed on the vivacious sallies of youth, when in the company of their elders; and, though I am still so far of the old school as to be dis-

pleased with a talking girl, who runs away with my due share of the mental banquet, I admit, that a mixture of all ages is most likely to convey mutual pleasure, as a mixture of different pursuits and occupations tends to render conversation instructive, provided they all meet, 'in honour preferring one another.'"

We spoke of the predilection for good temper, which was now carried to such excess as not only to usurp the claims of more valuable qualities, but, from want of discrimination, was often supposed to be present, when, in fact, there was only levity, a certain sprightliness of manner, or the not very exalted quality of being pleased, when every body tried to gratify you. Men, we agreed, were bad judges of our sex in this particular, and often bestowed this really noble

distinction on mere laughing, inconsiderate girls. Ellen mentioned a young acquaintance, who captivated a lover by the equanimity with which she bore the destruction of a superb worked muslin dress.

"And what was your friend's character?" said my grandmother.

"Certainly not remarkable for command of temper. She was an only child, liberally provided with every thing, and had only to ask her indulgent parents, in order to have the loss supplied by something more costly."

"And how ended the tenderness?"

"In marriage; and I hear the poor husband is continually reproaching her for having deceived him."

"He is as unjust as he was undiscerning," said my grandmother. "He drew a false conclusion. A prudent, economical, industrious girl would

have felt mortified; an ingenuous one could not have concealed that she was hurt at the destruction of a dress, on which she had employed many hours of domestic privacy with a view to facilitate her introduction to scenes of social gaiety, as well as to procure her the meed of well-earned praise. I do not mean that she should have disturbed the party by complaints, or annoyed the offender with frowns, but that she would have appeared mortified and unable immediately to rally her spirits. To mistake thoughtlessness for that command of excited feeling, which alone can be denominated good temper, is as absurd as to ascribe amiableness to one who is always laughing in the presence of gentlemen, either that she may show a good set of teeth, or induce them to think her a pleasant companion. Mind is

the constituent part of real good temper, which requires principle, consistency, and uniformity. I would caution these Euphrosynes who are so very pleasant while two or three marrying men are hovering about them, that if they ever deal in a commodity the reverse of wreathed smiles, they be not liberal in exhibiting them in what they call a tabby party. The most despised old woman may be worth propitiating; she may have some male relative deliberating on matrimony; and as they will allow that it is in the nature of old cats to be spiteful, as well as to see in the dark, may she not in the critical moment of his decision pull young puss out of the bag and show her off to her admirer, not purring and playful, but in the unseemly act of growling and scratching?"

"Do you remember," inquired

Mrs. Goodenough, "the Snarl family in our neighbourhood, who, though they spent all their time at home in quarrelling, had yet unsettled disputes enough to last them when they went into company?"

"Most certainly; it was impossible to forget them; nor could one look at a phial of wasps, caught in sugared liquor, without remembering the sweets of their family parties."

"And the very sensible clever women of our young days, who piqued themselves on their dexterity at hits, flings, throws, and sets-down, which imposed a silence of five minutes at every volley on the liveliest party, only interrupted by the faint 'he, he, he,' of the wounded individual, and the triumphant 'ha, ha, ha,' of her who threw the missile."

"Most certainly," was again the

reply; "and I also rejoice in the conviction that such homicides of domestic comfort would if they escaped annihilation be now by general consent banished to Coventry."

"The egotists," resumed Mrs. Goodenough, "were rather more endurable, especially my rural cousin Mrs. Chatwell, who vegetated in her native village for sixty years, and deeming her little set to be the human race, found prodigies in all her acquaintance, and superlative excellence in whatever was her own property. She lived in a perpetual delirium, more agreeable to herself than to her visitors, yet, being rich and hospitable, she found numbers ready to admit, that her roast beef had a finer grain, that her turkies were plumper, and her fruit larger and better flavoured than those of her neighbours. With due allow-

ance for an amiable weakness, they exercised their patience when she talked of her grandson's wit, and her granddaughter's feeling heart, while the young lady and gentleman played at bo-peep under the table. The exuberant satisfaction of her placid physiognomy, indicating a perpetual day-dream, proved her to be the gratulating dupe of self-delusion, not the smooth impostor aiming to subject her hearers to the dicta of self-conceit. But all our veneration for her contented disposition, and the kindliness of her affections, could not repress a general rejoicing in her neighbourhood, when the return of an incipient hoarseness reduced Mrs. Chatwell's voice to an audible whisper, which no one who did not dine with her twice a week was compelled to hear so as to understand."

"And do you," in return inquired

Mrs. Loveday, " remember the sentimentals? From my early and rooted affection for Sir Charles Grandison, I do regret that they are gone out of fashion. The popularity of Joseph Surface's exposure and the numerous copies of his hypocrisy and disgrace, which the theatre and the press have supplied, have fixed, shall I say, a too contumelious opprobrium on every expression of moral feeling, and we can hardly express our abhorrence of any crime, or an attachment to right principles, without hearing some one like Sir Peter Teazle thunder out an interdiction of sentiment. I reprobate cant with all my heart; but still think this extreme avoidance may check the generous feelings of young people, and even make them doubt whether virtue itself is not now ungenteel, as well as its natural language."

The conclusion was admitted; and Mrs. Goodenough continued to pass in review the social groupes of olden times, when society, if less refined, was more jocose; when friends met without the toil of anxious preparation, and, on parting, were sincerely desirous to meet again; when the laugh was hearty and the wit trite, the smile unassumed and the shake of the hand so cordial, that your elbow ached after the operation; when companions and friends scolded one another, yet parted in perfect charity, and painful feelings did not keep you awake all night pondering whether there had not been contempt in Mrs. Courtly's courtsey, and whether Lady Poring really did not, or in fact would not, see you. "These," said she, "Mrs. Loveday, were the times of the practical jokers: they were a joyous set; and had at

least the merit of endeavouring to make people merry."

"I recollect them well," returned my grandmother, "and I so far patronised their salutary designs as to allow myself to go on a sleeveless errand on the first of April, and to endure a blackened face, or the withdrawing of my chair at harvest homes and twelfth nights. But, my dear madam, is it not as incorrect to bring these into a dissertation on conversible beings, as it would be to introduce the antics of Punch into a description of the happiest efforts of the histrionic art? Early in my life, these wits were supplanted by another very comical set, called hoaxers, whose celebrity consisted in telling jocular falsehoods, that affected your possessions instead of your persons, but created a vast deal more amusement to your neighbours, and annoy-

ance to yourself, than the tricks of the slap-and-bang men. I do not think that this pseudo-wit is quite out of fashion, having lately heard an instance of its being sported on the feelings of one who is an affectionate sister and dutiful daughter, and to whom was sent some feigned intelligence relating to her family which nearly proved fatal. The quizzers are yet in being, and still esteemed good company by all who are not so unfortunate as to be at that moment writhing in their thumb-screws. The game of quizzing is, however, conducted on more liberal principles than that which formerly required for every company one established butt. The better feelings now introduced render it necessary that it should be played by two persons, that jests and gibes should be fairly bandied, and each player permitted to score a

hit. The rebound of wit is very amusing if the parties play neatly; but I think, on the whole, one oftenest requires those companions whose temperament I will term the mild green of the soul, as refreshing to our mental faculties when over-wearied with life's cares, as the lively verdure of the meadows is to eyes when dazzled by the glare of a meridian sun. An hour spent with such persons produces no intoxicating exhilaration, neither does it awaken regret, or cause mortification. We feel that the pleasure, if not intense, has been mutual; that our asperities have been smoothed, our cares lightened, and our sorrows deposited in a secure casket, of which, honour and affection hold the key. And while your foot-boy, whom I see advancing with your umbrella and plaid is escorting you home, I will

tell my girls where to find such a companion."

"Before I go," said Mrs Good-enough, bowing at the compliment, "at hazard of losing some of my mild green in your opinion, I must tell you of a new sect of talkers, by whom I was annoyed during my late peep at the fashionable world: I do not think they have yet taken out a name, so I will give them that of bamboozlers, till they agree upon what they may deem a more piquant appellation. Perhaps they may trace their descent from the quizzers whom you have just been describing, but I own I think the bamboozler much less amusing. I have not the gift of intuition; and I could sometimes find out what the quizzer aimed at by his language, whereas I might as well await the replies of a native New Hollander, or a Chactaw

Indian, as expect the answer of one of these mystifiers, who set out with a determination that you never shall understand them. We read that in the infancy of the world, man aimed at making himself independent of superior controul, by building a tower that should reach to heaven; but the design was frustrated by the confusion of tongues, and thus the builders were divided into tribes, and sent to explore and people distant regions. Perhaps, the bamboozlers also intend to emigrate when they shall have become sufficiently numerous; and as we are said to be over-peopled, I laud the patriotic design, and heartily wish them a good voyage over 'the vasty deep.' Probably they may have some private symbols of communication for holding as much intercourse with each other as their inclinations require; but there

is ample space in those vast savannas and antres wild, where your nearest neighbour is one hundred miles distant, for the art of producing non-comprehensibility to be improved to perfection. I confess, I think it an art which will rather retrograde than advance civilisation, but it may be tolerated in infant states; and the Neophytes will not be missed in England, where a new invention, similar to the Chinese puzzle, can supply their place. At first, I looked upon them merely as living enigmas, but I fear they are not only disagreeable but mischievous animals, who, while they perplex you with *their* Babylonish dialect, contrive to look into *your* character with a view of playing you off as an automaton for their amusement, or converting you into a machine to use for their own advantage. But as

the strong arm of ridicule has anatomised their structure, and discovered in them propensities too degrading to consist with those of a gentleman, I trust the Trebecks and Vivian Greys of the present day will only survive in the revolting delineations that bear those names."

CHAP. XIV.

A CLASH of bells, which seemed to make the old tower of Ringrove church rock on its base, and a loud halloo of the village boys, indicated intelligence so important, that Giles was dispatched to inquire the cause; but ere he returned, Frederic ran up the gravel walk, rushed into the parlour, and became the herald of his own arrival. He greeted us with unaffected transport: nothing could exceed the joyous glow of his countenance, or the cordial shake of his hands. I am sure I returned their pressure with equal warmth, and my grandmother caressed him as if he had been her own son. But Ellen's behaviour was very extraordinary: she looked as frigid

and as grave as if she had been transformed into marble. We were quite surprised; and my grandmother bade her go out and fetch Bridget, to pay her compliments to the captain. On her return, Ellen was more like her usual self, but there were traces of tears on her countenance.

The day passed off, I thought, delightfully, though Ellen's spirits appeared still forced, and her manner constrained. "Surely," said I to her, when we retired to rest, "I have not done any thing to offend you?"

"Offend me!" she exclaimed; "why that question, dearest girl?" and as she pressed me in her arms, I felt her heart beat as if it would burst her bosom.

"Has Frederic displeased you, then?" said I. "You had used to

be most eloquent and copious in his praise."

"No, no, Emma; why suppose such strange things? I think him, as I ever did, truly worthy and agreeable; and I pray for his happiness with equal fervour, and for yours, too, my sweetest cousin."

This combination of my name with Frederic's pointed to a conclusion which my day-dreams had not yet anticipated, and I felt my blood rush to my face. Ellen faintly rallied me on my blushes, and I as faintly denied feeling any emotion. We separated for the night, I know not how: Ellen slept soundly; but I confess that bridal attire and wedding cake were amongst my visions.

Frederic became our daily visitor. He laughed and chatted with me, and looked at Ellen, whose manner continued to be pensive, sedate, and re-

tiring. I never felt in such excellent spirits. She observed the change, and said to me one day, "We shall at last make you fond of Ringrove."

"Kindness," said I, "by attaching us to the persons of our friends, makes us in time partial to the spot they inhabit. It is impossible for me to experience so much affectionate treatment, and not to be happy in the society of those I so dearly love."

"Those you so dearly love! Ah, Emma! but the remark is just; and I delight at last in seeing you, as I long have wished."

"My happiness would be perfect," said I, "if I could but see you what you were three months ago. I am sure, Ellen, your heart is as susceptible of kind attentions as mine, and you are at least as much beloved by every one as I am. Why, then, are you not

now the cheerful, lively girl you once were?"

"Don't ask me. Perhaps I am not quite well, or have a fit of the spleen, or of romance, or the fine lady's complaint, of not knowing what is the matter with me. In short, you will very much oblige me by taking no notice of me."

In the course of conversation one day, Ellen was led to say, that she fancied it must be very pleasant going to —— races in a phaeton not very high, with a skilful driver. These races had been long the talk of the neighbourhood, and Ellen was further induced to own, she had never been on a race-course.

A few days after, Frederic drove such a carriage as she described by my grandmother's door, in very good style. The excursion was repeated; and the third morning, Mrs. Good-enough was seated by her son's side;

and, at her evening visit, enlarged on the easiness of the vehicle, and the good temper of the horses; declaring, that though she was naturally a coward, she had such confidence in Frederic's skill, that she had promised to go with him to —— races, which would be in a few days."

"Will you favour us with your company, Ellen?" said the gallant tar, in a tone that did not anticipate a refusal.

"No, Mr. Goodenough." My grandmother looked surprised; Frederic, highly disconcerted, and in a very different accent, inquired why?

"I have engaged, in case I ever went to —— races, to go with Mary Brown and her party."

"Do you hold a contingent engagement, formed in jest, to be so very sacred?" inquired my grandmother.

"Why, you know there has been

some little estrangement between us; and in such circumstances one should avoid the shadow of a slight. Mary has explained her behaviour, and were I now to break my word, it would appear resentful."

Frederic's countenance brightened with an approving smile. "Satisfactorily explained," said he. "Miss Herbert, I hope you are not included in this engagement." I bowed a negative. "And will you honour my mother and me with your company?" I bowed an affirmative. The evening again passed off most charmingly; I was even more gay than ever; and the most unprejudiced person would have pronounced Frederic infinitely agreeable.

It had been too much my practice to come last to the breakfast-table, but the next morning I rose with the sun.

I had several alterations to make in my wardrobe, and was so perplexed in deciding whether a muslin or a silk dress would best accord with Frederic's phaeton, that I soon puzzled and worked myself into a head-ache, to relieve which I strolled into the garden, and threw myself and my branch of sweet briar on a settee under the library-window. The sash was up, it being a fine autumnal morning, and I heard my grandmother and my cousin in deep discourse; it was too important for me to forget a syllable.

"These excuses will not serve; there must be some other reason for your depression, and the change of your behaviour to the Goodenoughs."

Ellen was silent.

"Has your opinion of Frederic changed since his acquisition of for-

tune, which we once thought was the only requisite for happiness that he could want; for I will even commend your coldness if you have discovered in him a light mind unequal to the burden of prosperity?"

"Oh, no, indeed! he is still what he ever was, or even more amiable, more intrinsically worthy."

"And still, Ellen, the man with whom you once owned to me you could most willingly pass your future life?"

"Dear grandmamma, forget the folly of my volunteered affections; Frederic never made me any offer: it was therefore indelicate in me to make such a concession; and now I am grown wiser, and will say he never can be any thing to me but the son of your most valued friend; except — ex-

cept he should become Emma's husband."

"You surprise me, Ellen. Has he indicated such an intention?"

"No; but poor Emma——you will be secret——she has never told me, but I am very sure she really loves him. You shake your head. Oh, you have not observed them as I have done. But you must recollect how dull she was while he was in London, and now she is all vivacity. How her eyes follow him! How she steals a look when she is unobserved! How she adopts all his opinions! How she blushes when he speaks to her. Dear Emma, she has a thousand excellences when one knows her thoroughly; and I am sure her life's peace depends on her gaining Frederic."

"And you mean to secure that peace by the sacrifice of your own?"

"Dear grandmamma, do consider Emma's prospects. You tell me that every hope of saving my uncle Herbert from ruin is frustrated; that he is a declared bankrupt; that his creditors are about to take possession of every thing; that she has no home to return to, and must not expect a sixpence from him; nay, that what she lately supposed was a remittance from him, and which mortified her so much from its scantiness, was supplied by you, who concealed the source from which it originated, that you might gradually prepare her for her change of fortune."

"It is all too true, my dear, and Emma's prospects are very dreary; but what are yours?"

"I can live with you, and be your nurse and companion."

"Could not Emma do the same?"

"She is not so well used to you, nor so able to assist you, and I am afraid would not be quite happy, which I know I shall be."

"My good Ellen, you have been reading some romantic tale of self-devotion, and have wrought yourself up to endure the sacrifice of a Decius or an Iphigenia. This you will afterwards sorely repent; and pray let me ask, are Frederic's happiness and wishes considered in this heroic resolve?"

"Of course, I could not say any thing to him, but Emma is so good, so pleasant, when quite herself, that I know if I give him cause to think, by persisting in a change of manner, that my views have taken some other turn, he must in time like her; and he is so sensible, so worthy, so every way deserving, that I am sure Emma cannot

fail of being a very good wife to such a husband."

"Really, my dear, this plan of transferring affections, and choosing a wife for one who is more than suspected to be an admirer of yourself, is even more magnanimous than declining the hand of Henry Delmont at our village hops; and telling him Mary Brown was a better dancer, because you knew Mary wished to dance with the nabob, and you did not care about it. But, in a partner for life, men have a right to be less acquiescent; and I strongly doubt not only whether Frederic will ever cast his eyes on Emma, but also, whether she really has fallen in love with him."

"Oh, grandmamma!"

"Or whether, trained as she has been to consider all such as commodities liable to be converted into (to

use her own phrase) a good establishment, the same watchings, and laughings, and colourings, would not take place in the presence of any other unmarried man. Tell me, if Mr. Greenwood, Henry Delmont, or even General Repell had offered himself while Frederic was absent, would either have been refused?"

I felt ready to sink under the humiliation of conscious shame, especially, when I found that my dear advocate could not parry this close interrogatory.

My grandmother resumed. "I am quite certain that it is only a flirtation. I have seen the world."

"Were this remark from any one but you, grandmamma, I should say, How uncandid!"

"And was it any girl but my own ingenuous Ellen, who offered to give

up the man she loves, (don't deny it, child, that blush is my evidence,) whom she has long loved, whom she has reason to believe loves her, whose mother has long viewed her in the light of a future daughter; a man with whom (as far as his profession admitted) she has been domesticated from infancy, from which period their hopes, fears, and views have been blended; and this, because she *suspects* a young friend, after a few weeks' acquaintance, thinks she shall like him, he being the only man with whom she can just now conveniently fall in love, because he is the only one with whom she converses; — I say, if any girl but my own Ellen made this proposal, I should either think she was deceiving me by acting a scene of sentimental romance, or only fit to be placed in a lunatic asylum.

"Indeed, grandmamma, I am neither a mad-woman nor an actress. But do look again at Emma's prospects, should she not acquire a home of her own."

"First tell me the comfort she would find, or rather bring to Mr. Goodenough's, if she entered it with merely mercenary views, and in opposition to his inclination. I admit, that she is at heart a worthy girl, my daughter's daughter. But see what a town education and town pursuits have made her! When she first came amongst us, had she been taught one duty requisite for a wife, mistress, or mother, though impelled, as by the first law of existence, to strain every nerve to acquire those distinctions? Was not her devotion to every useless, or at best ornamental accomplishment strengthened by her contempt for

whatever was useful? What were her views in marriage? To promote the honour and comfort of her husband, — or to thrust her hand into his purse, and command the indulgences which her education has taught her to require? Consider what Mrs. Herbert has done for my unfortunate son-in-law. His property when they married was more than treble that of young Goodenough. I grant that Emma has become more correct in her views, under what — may we proudly say — *better* influence; but would she not still be inclined to look at her father's establishment as the model of her own? You know she languished in retirement; and if she now appears happier, it is because she hopes through Frederic's means to escape from the ennui it inspires. We tried in vain to recon-

cile her to the comforts of the domestic hearth, to reading, to work, to music, to conversation; a little social drive, the garden, the poultry-yard, village perambulation; all were very dull. Good humouredly she tried to smile, but her thoughts were not with us; they were straying to operas, balls, and routs; and fluttering amongst feathers, flowers, and flounces. I do not blame *her;* she has been made miserable by having been instructed to look at pleasure as the end of existence. She possesses on her own account, as well as on her mother's, my warm love, and I strive to make her happy. But as Frederic Goodenough's wife must confine her enjoyments within the bounds that I have enumerated, how can I even, for her own comfort, wish her to bear that name

till I feel assured that she would be contented with simple, cheap, home-bred pleasures, and be steady in the practice of domestic duties?"

"Oh, my dear grandmamma! I am so convinced of Emma's good principles and good sense, that I know she would conform to every thing that Frederic required, and as to your gaining her affections, there your desires have fully succeeded. She is so distressed when you look dispirited, and on the night you were ill she was so dreadfully alarmed ——"

"Reserve your justification, Ellen, till I accuse. She had never heard country manners and enjoyments mentioned but as subjects for ridicule, or domestic duties named but as degrading and vulgar. So taught, you would have been her counterpart."

"Dear, dear grandmamma, but do

tell me what can we do to make her comfortable?"

"Our first business is to make her acquainted with afflictions, which we can no longer conceal from her knowledge: they, I trust, will perform their purifying work, and we must try to support her under them. I shall immediately inform her of the state of her father's affairs, which, from a hope that they would be retrieved, I have concealed. Consider, my dear, and judge: would it be correct for her to appear in public, in a young officer's phaeton, and the name of Herbert be in the very same week's Gazette?"

"Undoubtedly not; and surely that is also a strong reason against my going."

"Unquestionably."

"But, grandmamma, can you, oh! can you, support poor Emma?"

"She is as welcome as yourself to share my crust, and shall share it while a morsel remains. We may find further retrenchment necessary."

"Yes, any thing so that you can but give her a home. We will sell the ponies, part with Giles; and, indeed, you allow me so liberally for clothes, that with a little more industry, and management, and attention to the duty of saying No, to *undeserving* beggars, it may almost stretch out for both."

"Our future plans, Ellen, will depend on contingencies and calculations, as to what my income will do. It is my fixed resolution, that Emma shall not be thrown on the wide world a waif of fortune."

At this declaration, my sobs would have betrayed that I was privy to this discussion; but Ellen's also became so

audible, as to withdraw attention from mine. "My love, my own affectionate, generous girl, command yourself."

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," said Ellen, "but go on."

"You know the larger moiety of my income is an annuity, which of course affords no future provision for my family. The rest was honourably saved out of the wreck of a once ample fortune. Your dear father, Ellen, fell in the prime of life, and in the service of his country. I will not speak of your mother: she relinquished her claim to you, but not to her legal share of your father's little wealth. Your portion has been husbanded, interest and principal: it now amounts to a sum which will prevent your feeling the degradation of being a pennyless wife. I have lived very carefully,

seeking by my savings to leave enough to support you after my decease, in the same comforts that we shared together. I thought it my duty so to do, since I abhor the idea of forcing a girl on marriage as the means of procuring her bread. To this fund Emma has an equal claim."

"To all you are possessed of. Am not I provided for by my own dear father, and your provident care?"

"No more self-devotion, Ellen; I will act justly. It is a case in which not even my love for you would excuse preference. Circumstances may arise which may induce me to give Emma all: as Frederic Goodenough's wife, you will not require the little sprinkling I could scatter on your flourishing fortunes. And now dry your eyes: he will soon be here; and when you tell him, that neither you

nor your cousin can honour him with your company to —— races, do not look like Themis on the bench, passing sentence on a criminal, nor drawl out Mr. Goodenough so solemnly."

"I dare not laugh, grandmamma, I feel so hysterical: besides, what a scene of misery have we to anticipate with poor Emma, when we tell her she has a ruined father, and no home?"

"We will shorten it by adding, that she shall ever find one at Ringrove; and friends most indulgent and sympathising."

I quitted the bench on which I reclined. The first symptom of a renovated mind was a determination to be ingenuous, but my repressed feelings required a little previous indulgence. My trembling limbs scarce sufficed to bear me to my chamber,

where I flung myself on my knees, yielding at first to a flood of tears, and then pouring forth the spontaneous language of supplication and gratitude. I rose much calmer for this exercise, and penned the following note to Ellen: —

"Excuse me, dearest cousin, for not appearing at breakfast this morning, and for requesting to spend it in my own chamber. I have been witness to all that passed in the library between you and my grandmother, and have resolved to deserve the love you have shown me; but self-examination has much to do before it can renovate the selfish heart, and correct the vain imagination of EMMA HERBERT."

In five minutes after I had dispatched the note, Ellen was at my chamber door, which I had bolted.

"Dearest Emma, do but speak to me; tell me, if you are ill."

"No, my best Ellen, only in a whirl of self-accusing thoughts."

"My grandmother says, you must come down to her only for one quarter of an hour, and then you shall be alone."

"I cannot sustain her extreme goodness till I am more composed."

"Nay, if the sight of her will overcome you, only let me bring you some breakfast, and hold you five minutes to my heart: say 'Yes,' or I think it will break."

"The best heart in the world shall no longer be pained by the most ungenerous one," I replied as I opened the door. We clung to each other for some time without the power of utterance. Ellen spoke first, but it was only in protestations that our for-

tunes should be blended, our lives undivided.

"No," said I firmly, "there are not two Frederic Goodenoughs, and one cannot be halved. He is yours, I was going to say; but I recollect that, having no claim, I have not even a right to relinquish him."

"We will both abjure him," was her reply, "sooner than he shall be a source of discord, or give you pain."

"No source of discord, Ellen; no pain. My grandmother is right. It was vanity and selfishness, not attachment; the former made me fancy that his mother and himself viewed me with decided preference; the latter turned my attention from every indication of your rooted affection. Tell my grandmother, that, sinking on my knees, I crave to live with her, and be her Ellen Loveday, while you

bless the man of your choice with a wife worthy of him."

I am confident that I never felt so near being happy as when I had uttered these words, and had sufficient strength of mind to know that I could conform to their import. In strict truth, I could not say that I had made any sacrifice, for I immediately recollected many men as agreeable as Frederic; men who, I also now knew, thought not of me: yet for a time I fancied myself a heroine. I soon rejoined the party in the library, and passed with them what I may truly call a happy day. The certainty of my ruined fortunes scarcely crossed my mind; and the evident satisfaction with which my grandmother witnessed my behaviour, proved that I had applied the proper balm to her wounded heart. A letter was dispatched to the Goodenoughs, candidly

owning the state of the family affairs, and adding that our being seen in public would be indecorous. This soon brought them to us; and, not to enter into details, the disappearance of Ellen's assumed reserve quickly drew from Frederic that avowal which was so essential to the peace of both families, and which had been withheld once because he had not the prospects which justify an honourable man in contracting an engagement with an amiable and affectionate woman, and then by his fearing that his "happiest choice was sought too late." Ellen most faithfully preserved my secret, and left him to ascribe her depression to a concern at my broken fortunes, of which I was not then aware. I soon discovered new proofs of her generous attachment to me, and of her deserved influence over her lover in the in-

creased regard, I might call it affectionate respect, with which he treated me. His manner had all the protecting kindness of a brother; and without glancing at my misfortunes, he lost no opportunity of convincing me that I should find in him a guardian and a friend.

But in the brightest days of our mortal life clouds of sorrow will appear on the horizon; and Frederic soon disclosed, that though, through the liberality of his relation, he was released from the necessity to follow his profession for the sake of emolument, he remained bound to it by the ties of honour. Eager to acquire such distinction as would secure independence, in which he hoped Ellen would share, he had solicited an appointment in an expedition then in preparation to achieve a great national object; and

to the success of which, those who best knew him asserted that his nautical skill, resolute enterprise, and persevering fortitude, would greatly contribute. The application had been made before his introduction to his liberal patron. After he had sought and obtained Ellen's consent to be his wife, he was informed, not without pain, that the appointment was granted to him, with immediate promotion in rank; and large hopes were held forth in case the enterprise should be crowned with success. His naval friends, nay, his own high spirit, told him, that retreat would now be dishonourable. He looked at Ellen, and sighed at the conclusion; concealing from her, and indeed from us all, the dangers and privations of the voyage; he only confessed that it would impose a two years' absence, and requested to be made

secure of his treasure before his departure, by receiving her nuptial vows. My grandmother disapproved of this proposal; and requested Ellen not to pledge herself to duties which she could not immediately begin to perform. Contingencies might arise, which would compel both to regret the step; many were the dangers annexed to the situation of a widowed wife; and could he depend on her constancy in that character, if he doubted her as a plighted maid? Their union was therefore delayed till Frederic, on his return, could, with a consciousness of having discharged all that his country claimed of him as an enterprising mariner, retire to the less arduous, but not less useful, station of a country gentleman.

Of success the gallant youth never seemed to doubt; and while he remain-

ed at Ringrove Ellen's mind caught his enthusiasm, nor did she anticipate the cold thrills of terror that would occur during the long months of loneliness and suspense, when the absence and probable danger of those we love shoots like an ice-bolt through the agonised heart. These reflections, which often occurred to my grandmother's experienced mind, did not cloud the hours "redolent of joy and youth" that intervened till Frederic left Ringrove and launched upon the ocean. Then, resistless as a torrent, they rushed upon Ellen's thoughts, and called for the most active offices of friendly sympathy.

I frankly confess that the communings I had with my own heart, during the smiling period when the lovers daily met, walked, laughed, and talked of their future plans of happiness, did

not disclose secrets satisfactory to my design of its entire renovation. A sigh would rise, not so much of envy as of regret, at Ellen's bright prospects, compared with the loneliness of my own; and all my grandmother's comments on the equal dealings of Providence,—all the anecdotes which she told me of the undisclosed sorrows which haunt the couch of the prosperous, or the coming griefs that hover over them,—and even Ellen's assurance that I should be bridemaid and companion in the wedding tour, and Frederic's entreaty that every hour I could spare from my grandmother should be theirs,—often failed to support my spirits, though I was no longer the unresisting victim of ennui. But the task to which I was soon summoned, of witnessing dear Ellen's life-consuming anxiety, made me a thorough

convert to my grandmother's doctrine, that they who have the fewest social delights, being less bound to life, gain in equanimity what they want in enjoyment.

Ellen now shrunk from society, and even from the discharge of her favourite duties; her thoughts were solely occupied with Frederic; she was continually calculating with me the period of his return, and the chances which might expedite or retard that desired event. My grandmother discouraged all those fruitless discussions, which only weaken the mind, and praised that passive fortitude which all women deliberating on marriage were bound to acquire, since, without it, their duties as wives and mothers could not be adequately performed. Endeavouring to turn the course of Ellen's thoughts, she adverted to the improvement of

education. Affected timidity now excited contempt rather than interest; nor do the apprehensions of ladies respecting robbers and accidents spoil a party of pleasure with an assemblage of horrors: not even a beauty of eighteen would hope to interest by attempting a picturesque swoon at the approach of a mouse, or by sporting a shriek on seeing a spider. On the contrary, some (she sincerely hoped only a few) dashing belles assumed a degree of masculine courage, and affected masculine strength and confident manners, not less remote from passive fortitude, which quietly expects, not provokes, occasions to show those latent energies that are the result of principle, not excited by the love of display. But there is also a species of active courage to which females ought to aspire, and they should

habituate themselves to that bodily dexterity which enables them to put it in practice. The common name for this quality is presence of mind, by which life has often been preserved (here, with a grateful look, she bowed to Ellen): it consists in so far commanding the feelings at the moment of danger as to preserve the reason unclouded, and the bodily frame alert and able to obey the judgment: in the mother of a family, few valuable properties are in such constant requisition. As to effrontery in vice, she once hoped that it had become obsolete, and that those whose character had been tarnished sought privacy or affected decorum. But a recent instance had occurred, wherein a criminal (for that in fact was the properest term) dared to remonstrate against the edict which banished her from society,

and to impugn the decorous and royal hand which drew the irremediable bolt against her, after that hand, palsied by death, had dropped its ivory sceptre: further, she was told that there were eulogists who panegyrised and aggravated the sarcasm, as resulting from a noble spirit of resistance to an arbitrary mandate. This was a singular occurrence in the present day, and she hoped would remain so. She noticed the circumstance merely to enter her protest against misapplying the term fortitude to indifference concerning deserved censure: there is great evil in giving wrong names to actions, and in not keeping the boundary line of vice and virtue totally distinct.

The passive courage of women appears in actions, of which the discriminating characteristic is conceal-

ment. "Consider, my dear girls," said she, "what our sex is daily called to suffer from the crimes and errors, the infirmities and misfortunes, the sorrows and pains, of those whom they best love, and with whose fate their own is interwoven. Many of these sufferings must be concealed, not only as to their cause but as to their effect. Cheerfulness must be assumed; all must seem to go well, while the heart is breaking. I am fond of royal instances, because, though the essence of virtue be intrinsic, eminent examples strongly influence inferior ranks. The late reign affords an instance of a queen, under legal age, concealing the most painful species of indisposition in her beloved lord; and dividing her time between trying to divert his malady, and practising that disguise of ease and cheerfulness which

the forms of state required. Still more imperious is a daughter's, sister's, wife's, and mother's duty, when it is not misfortune but guilt which requires a veil: the conflicts they endure, the patience they exercise, can never gain the praise of men; and this very circumstance directs them to aspire to a higher reward. It is this passive courage, combined with prudence, its almost constant concomitant, that gives women their peculiar fitness to mediate in family differences, and to sacrifice their own individual comfort to the general benefit. I know that men generally hold forth passive submission and acquiescent sweetness in a wife to be the acme of female perfection; and if these virtues consist in forbearing to struggle for the gratification of caprice, and in quietly resigning some desired self-enjoyment, I think

the opinion just. But I wish to raise my sex from the amorous voluptuousness and bland frivolity which is now held forth as their highest praise in the most successful master-pieces of polite literature. Scripture presents us with two instances of female daring: Esther standing forth at the peril of her life to divert Ahasuerus from his bloody design of exterminating the Jews; and Jezebel, not only a willing pander to her husband's crimes, but gratifying his caprice at the price of murder. In the first instance, fortitude appears to be not only compatible with gentleness, but to be its proper fruit. I know no description of natural timidity struggling with the courage of principle, more beautiful than that which represents Esther adorning herself in royal apparel with a heavy heart, and

after most fervent supplications for divine support, recurring to the innocent arts of female blandishment, modestly presenting herself as a suitor in her own palace, and advancing with trembling steps to touch the golden sceptre held out by the king as a signal that her intrusion on his hours of business was pardoned. Still, she does not dare to prefer her important suit; but only asks her husband and his cruel favourite to a banquet, hoping that the hours of hilarity might afford an opportunity to save her proscribed nation. It is not till at a second festal meeting that she feels emboldened to reveal her secret anguish; but when Persia's mighty Lord promises to grant her suit, 'even to the half of his kingdom,' how does she reply? 'If I have found favour in thy sight, O king! and if it please the king, let my

life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request; for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people, or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred.' Turn we now to Jezebel, who gratifies her husband's covetousness at the expence of the most sacred ties, human and divine. Instead of assisting him to overcome his unreasonable inclination to beautify his royal demesne at the expence of an independent high minded Israelite's local attachments, she profanes the sanctities of religion by commanding her emissaries 'to proclaim a fast, and to set Naboth on high amongst the people, and to suborn two men, sons of Belial, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king, and to stone him with stones till he died.' Here the gentle, timid,

obedient wife, who summons courage to divert her husband from an indiscriminate massacre, and to rescue him from the snares of a treacherous favourite, is contrasted with a presumptuous, violent, but accommodating woman, who not only confirms her lord in his bad intentions, but stirs him up to acts of wickedness, and uses his name to sanction her own plans of blasphemy, perjury, and murder. The courage of Esther was that of a guardian angel, that of Jezebel the audacity of a fiend."

I now observed, that the conduct of a lady, to whose valuable remains a quotation of my cousin's in a former conversation had directed my attention, furnished an instance of a different exercise of passive fortitude. I alluded to Miss Talbot's endurance of the cancerous disease, which eventually con-

signed her to the tomb; and her concealment of it from her aged, adoring mother, and from many of her fondly attached friends, during several years of hopeless suffering sustained in silent magnanimity.

"You are an apt disciple, Emma," resumed my grandmother, "and not likely to transfer my praise of fortitude to the mere assumption of masculine boldness, whether moral or physical. The lady whom you have named also illustrated another favourite tenet of mine; I mean the *possible*, — (I should rather say the frequent) union of high talents with eminent virtues and graces. Unhappily, too, she exemplified the truth of a remark which I think Swift made on Lady Bolingbroke, that ill health was often subjoined to a superior share of female attractions. But to possess every

talent and every blessing is above the lot of humanity."

Gratified by the praise which I had now duly learned to appreciate, I pointed out Lady Rachel Russell as another instance of rare fortitude.

"Most rare," replied my grandmother: "I often picture her to my mind's eye, Emma, sitting by her lord when he was arraigned for his life, acting as his secretary, and sufficiently composed to take notes of evidence and to point out discrepancies. I also see her leaving the corpse of one daughter to go to the chamber of another, who was then expecting the pangs of parturition; covering her maternal grief with a look of tranquillity, and, by a pardonable evasion, concealing the Duchess of Devonshire's death, lest Her Grace of Rutland should, through terror and distress, also suffer

the fate of Rachel. 'I have seen your sister out of bed this morning,' was the answer she made to her inquiry: she did not add, 'and in her coffin.'"

Our conversation now turned from real to imaginary females; and my grandmother instanced the practice which true genius was prone to follow, of investing its creations with true feminine qualities as incentives to general imitation, and setting up a correct standard of manners. She lamented a frequent deviation from this course in the present times, but (she spoke exultingly) the master magician still directs his readers to "woman's domestic honour and chief praise." In all the varieties of female character his eye has bodied forth, he has never tried to make that attractive which is not amiable. She then referred back to

classical times, to the applause which the noblest bards had bestowed on Alceste, Andromache, Penelope, and Electra; and remarked, "that notwithstanding the dazzling beauty of Helen, she only draws a brief admiration, ending in pity or execration. To descend to modern fictions, Fenelon's Antiope was a character of this description, and so was Milton's Eve, that fine personification of beauty, simplicity, and innocence, 'not obvious, not obtrusive,' even retiring when Adam's countenance seemed to indicate that he was 'entering on high thoughts abstruse,' and preferring, when the angel should be absent, to learn of her own husband, 'he relating, she sole auditress.' Strength of mind is the distinctive trait in Shakspeare's most perfect woman, Cordelia. She dares not tell an untruth, though it would

secure her due share of her father's favour and kingdom; yet she braves danger and death to restore that father! How sweetly is she characterised in one descriptive trait! 'Her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.' In ancient history," she continued, "many examples might be selected illustrative of the proposition that only what is really valuable in the female character commands lasting admiration; but, as I have been diffuse, I will only instance Octavia's fortitude as opposed to the pusillanimity of Cleopatra, so consonant to a voluptuary. The former, deserted and repudiated by the man she loved, after vainly endeavouring to divert from him the wrath of her brother, sets herself to collect his ruined fortunes, protects his friends, and educates

his children by a former wife. The latter, in a start of frenzied excitation, insists on accompanying her lover to a sea-fight on which his fortunes depended; shrinks at the first collision of the hostile fleets, and, by her flight, deprives him of fortune and of life."

It seemed as if my grandmother's attempts to lead Ellen's mind from vain regrets and sad forbodings had succeeded; for she adverted to that part of Eve's character which indicated Milton's opinion that women should withdraw from scientific discussions, and asked how far she thought this abstinence should be carried?

"I see no impropriety," returned she, "in a really well-informed woman entering into a scientifical conversation at a private party, provided, that when she perceives discussion degenerate into dispute, she makes a timely re-

treat. But the misfortune is, that few women so qualified will deign, I should rather say *dare*, to instruct and amuse: there is a diffidence about true genius, which is at once its ornament and blemish."

"Does this," said I, "correspond with what I have heard you lament, that people of superior talent and information often felt, or affected to feel, contempt for others who were not gifted with the same endowments."

She replied, "There are little minds in the aristocracy of genius, as well as in those of rank and wealth, and such contempt results from valuing our gifts and pursuits as the one thing needful, and despising all who do not ride the same hobby; yet I believe that the pride of learning and talent is far more evident in male than among female writers. The difference may

partly proceed from the gentler suasive character of our sex; and certainly a college education is extremely calculated to generate an exclusive predilection for all who pursue the same studies, and are animated by the same hopes. We have a strong instance of this in the vast importance attached to academical honours, and to disappointments in the acquisition of them, as well as in the expectation which a student entertains that the distinctions which he enjoyed within the university will accompany him into the world. There, he at first feels like an inhabitant of another planet, every moment jostled by persons engaged in views and pursuits opposite to his own, and often in his turn encountering the scorn he bestows, till the collision rubs off the rust of science contracted in seclusion, and he finds his right place

in society. These vicissitudes cannot happen to women, and if they incur the reproach without the excuse, they are more unpardonable. But notwithstanding the ridicule on *bas bleus*, I do believe that a female pedant is a less frequent nuisance than a male one; I must, however, own, that there is an aristocracy less honourable, and to which we are accused of paying universal and implicit obedience:—I mean the aristocracy of fashion, which interdicts all intercourse with those who lie under the ban of its capricious sovereign. However estimable for mental endowments or moral character, what is called vulgar, by which term is meant unpolished, must not be endured. I deem these epithets to designate different characters; the former to mark an offensive demeanour, often found in

high stations, and indicating innate coarseness of mind, the latter compatible with many estimable qualities, and simply meaning either a want of opportunity to study good models, or a disinclination to acquire the graces of manner. Indeed, Emma," and she gave me a significant but at that time an explicable look, " I believe good husbands may be found amongst unpolished men, and even in ungenteel professions. As an unusual command of temper may abate the difficulties of good sense and gentleness, when unfortunately united to folly and violence, so may refinement and respectable rusticity contract a happy union; the one acquiring strength, the other grace from the intercourse. But vice cannot form an alliance with virtue, without endangering her stability; and if virtue

fails to convert, she must either lose all affection for her partner, or gradually sink into the torpor of false liberality and languid indifference."

CHAP. XV.

So many domestic and neighbourly duties devolved upon me by dear Ellen's increasing listlessness and incapacity to go her rounds, as she used to call her regular discharge of every social duty, that for a long time I had little leisure to transcribe my grandmother's many instructive conversations; but an event happened during my second spring at Ringrove, which, though connected with the chief subject of my thoughts since I was fifteen, came so unawares, and from a person whom I never once thought of or tried to attract, as to surprise me exceedingly: I mean an offer of marriage from Mr. Smith, at the Grange, Kitty's brother.

Possibly, had I not been so engrossed by Ellen's depression, I should have had some suspicions. Kitty called frequently, and if she staid the evening, which she regularly did when invited, Richard (or, as he was called in the neighbourhood, delightful Dick,) fetched her home. I never understood why that epithet was prefixed to his name till after he had made his proposals, and, perhaps, he was the only beau in the vicinity of Ringrove of whom I never fancied that he might possibly admire me: I have since been equally surprised at this exclusion, as his person only wanted an air of fashion to make it very good—his features were regular, and wore the expression of intelligence and joyous good humour—his conversation never offended, and often pleased by the *naïveté* and spirit of remarks that disdained to be flat-

tened down into the twaddle of the day; — he occupied his own estate, was esteemed a skilful agriculturist, his fortune commanded every comfort which his line of life required, his superiors respected him, but, content with his own people, he declined to sacrifice his independence for the sake of purchasing an occasional corner at a great man's table. I had never heard of any reproach being cast on his moral character: people often wondered why he did not marry, and I did go so far as to think that, if I were Mary Brown, I would sooner angle for his heart, than be the jest of the family at Flusterly Hall, which Bridget assured me she had found out to be the case. Further, I always did think him a native who might be tolerated in any society, because he was civil and unassuming: I went no further, till one

day, on my commending the taste with which he had laid out the shrubbery at the Grange, he told me he should be a happy man, if I would so far extend my approbation to the owner as to accept the offer of his hand and heart. I coloured, started, and wondered whether I ought to be offended; but, certainly, the man who first proposes marriage has an advantage over any subsequent admirer, for he generally inspires gratitude, if he does not awaken love; whereas the vows of later suitors, (especially if often preferred), are received as the due homage to invincible charms. Yet still I wished something more striking, romantic, or even sentimental, than this plain, and even abrupt declaration. There was, indeed, a little embarrassment in the hurried tone in which it was delivered, indicating a loss of self-

possession, which complimented my delicacy and my deserts by betraying a fear of refusal. But then, no look of intense anxiety, no supplicatory entreaty announced that death or distraction must be the result of my scorn. Besides, he took me by surprise, and without preparing me by previous compliments and attentions. It was some minutes before I could recollect myself enough to ask for a little time for consideration, ere I allowed him to broach the subject to my grandmother, which I knew would be tantamount to consent.

I certainly did debate a long time, thirty-six hours at least. The first objection was the name of Smith; simply Richard Smith, without any noble or genteel patronymic interwoven; then his imperfect bow, and a slouch in his gait, and the idea of how

he would have looked in Mrs. Herbert's drawing-room, or at my father's dinner-parties! Alas! those scenes were past, and my father and his family expelled from the walls where "they reigned and revelled." Again, the jests of the young companions with whom I used to associate, and our utter reprobation of the race of Vulcan, as we constantly called every Smith we heard of. But then the little chance of our ever re-meeting; and in the Ringrove world names were not excommunicated, and in both name and person its owner stood upon a par with his neighbours. Then his sister Kitty, who had long been his housekeeper, was the very acmé of care and industry in her department, and it was likely that he would expect similar good housewifery in me. This point was adjusted sooner than the

former objections, for use had made me an expert manager, and I gained so much praise for adroitness from my grandmother, who was an excellent judge, that as I now felt no degradation in the employment; I even dared a competition with Kitty's bright preserves and light biscuits. Four difficulties therefore were overcome. I trust I should have felt some repugnance at depriving Kitty of a home; for she was a good-tempered, quiet, well-meaning girl; but that objection was obviated by my knowledge of the report that she was on the eve of carrying off beau Greenwood, who, having recovered the understanding which his visit to the Toms and Jerrys in London had dispersed, was now commencing business, and looking out for a permanent house-keeper: he thought that the industrious, simple-minded

Kitty would make a better wife than the half-ladified Miss Brown, whose continual allusions to the Flutter family and to the proceedings at the hall, alarmed and offended her *ci-devant* admirer. Possibly, too, (such is the concatenation of events,) this long wavering swain's determination expedited the offer made to me, from one whom he was going to deprive of a home companion.

In thirty-six hours, as I have before said, I laid the matter before my grandmother, but it was not quite so long ere I had already communicated it to Ellen, and till then, I am sure, I really did deliberate. But I soon began to suspect which way the scale inclined; for I felt much hurt at her begging me to judge for myself, to consult my own inclinations, and to give full force to every objection

without saying one word in Richard's favour.

The next morning, after having twice or thrice tied and untied my work-bag, walked to the window to look at nothing, put all the chairs in their places, and again unsettled them; I stammered out to my grandmother that I wanted her advice on Mr. Smith's having made me an offer. "But," I added with eagerness, "indeed I do not now wish to leave you."

"That," said the dear old woman, "is a consideration on which I will not allow you to bestow a moment's thought. The point must be decided on other grounds. Have you any dislike to him, or objections to his situation in life?"

My work-bag was again untied, and my handkerchief applied to my face as I faintly answered, "I believe none that are very material."

" Have you sufficiently observed his temper, understanding, and manners, to conclude that you could pass your life comfortably in his society, or do you wish for further time before you decide?"

I answered with still greater trepidation, but with equal frankness, that really I did begin to think I could like him, but till the day before yesterday I never had regarded him with greater interest than any other general acquaintance.

" Ah! Emma! a random shot often does greater mischief, than the discharge of a battery in Cupid's wars. But tell me, have you seen any man whom you in your heart prefer? I mean any one whom your good sense and discernment tell you there is a chance of your obtaining; for our sex cannot be said to choose, we can only reject, or accept."

"No, I do not call to mind any one."

"Then," said my grandmother, "I conclude that your heart is free, or it would assist your recollection. But be not urged into marriage by a fear that celibacy will expose you to the evils of dependance and poverty. Against these I will leave you provision, that will suffice when aided by your present admirable habits of prudence and economy."

I answered with unusual warmth, "I will never sell myself for bread to a man I despise or dislike."

"Then," said my grandmother, with a face irradiated with pleasure, and kindly pressing my hand, "take, O take the farmer and the farm; and be as faithful in discharging the duties of a wife, as your views are honourable in accepting the name."

"Dear grandmamma, how solemn does that word sound when thus propounded to our consideration. But surely you are not going to urge a speedy conclusion of this affair."

"Custom, propriety, the different characters of the sexes, all prescribe that man should abjure, and woman propose delay; but I should say, if there be no real reason for deferring solemnization, a woman trifles with her future peace to propose delay, after she has had sufficient time for considering and determining on the ultimate result. Courtship is called the period of female sovereignty, and as regards the empire that is founded on beauty, I admit the justice of the designation; but with respect to the superior influences of mind and temper, the power which a faithful, kind, assiduous wife may acquire over her husband's

understanding, as well as his affections, I must form a worse opinion of the deserts of my own sex, as well as of man's penetration and right feeling, ere I can believe that what ought to confirm our empire has overthrown it. Did I not think, that what should be the steady object of a woman's ambition is attainable, I should, instead of advising, interdict marriage to my granddaughters, as a state that inevitably creates a host of cares and sorrows to which the spinster is a stranger, trials only counterbalanced by the wife's securing what celibacy finds not in its lonely journey, a sure protector and an unalienable friend."

"I did think, grandmamma, that at soonest you would deem the return of Frederic——"

"The return of Frederic, Emma!" and her face became white as the cambric which covered her bosom.

"Yes, and that the same day might see both your granddaughters" — I stammered and paused — "happily united to worthy husbands."

"Ah! Emma! suppose Frederic never returns."

I burst into tears; it was a possibility which I ever strove to banish as so very improbable, and I had blamed Ellen for giving it a thought.

"If this fearful suggestion overwhelms you, how can poor Ellen look to you for comfort, should distracting certainty succeed agonizing suspense? and would it not be advisable to secure in our family a man of strong mind and kind heart, who may render us those offices of friendship which helpless women often require, to say nothing of the relief his society would afford us during the tortures of suspense, and the loneliness of seclusion."

"But shall I not inflict a cruel wound in Ellen's heart, if I go to the altar while her own situation presents such a mournful contrast?"

"I have a view to Ellen's relief, as well as to your happiness, in objecting to an unnecessary delay, arising from false delicacy. Of this I am certain, no feeling so mean as envy, no consideration so base as selfishness, ever entered her generous heart. Her participation in your happiness will be so lively, that, I trust, it may withdraw her thoughts from her own tormenting fears. The feminine solicitude incident to nuptial preparations may restore somewhat of her lost alacrity. I am confident, that when you are withdrawn from the duties you now so ably undertake, she will see the necessity of resuming her former place, and there is no panacea for the

pangs of suspense so mollifying as occupation. Hers is a grief which admits of no alleviation from argument. It is in vain to say, do not fear, for the risk is imminent and the venture precious. Till Frederic had sailed, we knew not the extreme peril of his undertaking, otherwise, perhaps, my woman's heart might have tormented my woman's head with some suggested compromise between duty and safety; I might have attempted to lower the high standard of honour by which he measures his actions. But he is gone; Divine Providence watches over him, and what that Providence decrees is finally right. Yet oftentimes are we called upon to wade through stormy seas of affliction, before our issues end in peace."

"With these sad anticipations, how can I leave you?"

"You are not to leave us, and it is on this condition that I urge you to give us another friend, and an additional topic of conversation and thought, besides the dangers of unknown seas. The Grange is only a pleasant walk from us, and I shall put in strong claims for much of your society. Ellen shall be often with you, and leave me quite happy to enjoy my book, my pen, and my knitting in the safe custody of my grand manager, Bridget, and her auxiliary, Martha."

My grandmother now told me, that though she believed me when I assured her that I had not discovered it, Richard's preference was so visible, that she and Ellen had often discussed the probability of what had taken place. She remarked, that he seemed pleased with my appearance when he first saw me, but that his advances

were checked by some remarks (very insolent ones I don't doubt) which I pointed at country scenes, men, and manners. I, however, continued to be exclusively the object of his attention, and she thought that the liking was fast ripening into love; till Frederic Goodenough's continual visits, and my extraordinary gaiety, gave a second check. The proof that Ellen was the brave seaman's object, by the publicity given to their engagement, renewed in his mind a wish to gain *me;* but, still, my manner had excited doubts which he wished to have entirely cleared.

"And excuse me, Emma," said she, "if I frankly tell you, as I may without giving pain, for you are now an altered girl; your flirtation with the Lieutenant, though unperceived by the frank-hearted sailor, was too ap-

parent to escape the notice of a hesitating lover; and the coldness in his manner, which Ellen and I remarked, may be a warning to your sex never to trouble the water when they are angling for hearts."

"But, dearest madam, if he thus fears me, why does he come forward at all?"

"It is because *you are an altered character;* his remains the same. I do not state all this as the result of my own penetration; Kitty, who dearly loves you, and wished for this alliance with all her heart, disclosed to Ellen some secrets which we resolved to conceal from you, that your own good sense, not the prospect of a husband, might render you all we wished. Your lover is at once generous and prudent. Actuated by the former motive, he would have avowed his at-

tachment immediately on discovering your father's embarrassments; but the latter quality urged him to watch for their effect upon you, and there was no good reason why he should not adopt that precaution, as my countenance preserved you from immediate inconvenience. The result has proved you to be as gold purified in the fire. His fortune and character preserve him from mercenary motives; still he requires that his wife should be as free from extravagance as from caprice; and he has no objection to having her virtues fostered by the 'stern, rugged nurse, adversity.'"

I received that morning dear Ellen's most cordial congratulatory embrace, though she wept and trembled as she bestowed it. I found that she had observed my lover with a sister's eye, and all her remarks on his temper

and understanding were in his favour. Being still determined, however, that the decision should be my own act and deed, she concealed her hearty approbation. Mr. Smith that evening had an interview with my grandmother. She told me afterwards that his pro posals, as respected settlements, admitted but of one remark, that they were equally just and liberal. "As I expected," said she, "he pressed for an early celebration. He had known you long enough to appreciate your character, and he trusted, as he had never disguised his, or even put on the state dress of courtship, (these were his words), you understood him. By his sister's leaving him, he says he shall be undone in purse and comfort, unless you will make him still happier than he has been, by supplying her place. I like men who

find their chief pleasure in home, and in female society; and it would be unwise in you, Emma, to hazard his losing this habit of domesticati on. He thus pays a general compliment to our sex, and I shall lay the blame at your door, if we sink in his estimation."

"But when, dearest grandmamma, when am I to leave this dear invaluable home?"

"As to time, Emma, we are not absolutely bound to accede to what our future lords propose; but as it is grossly indelicate to urge their slow speed, so it is fantastically fastidious to attempt needless delays. He talked of the day of his sister's marriage as that which he would propose for his own, and I have promised to consult you on the subject."

"You must guide me in every thing,

for I have no other friend interested in my welfare."

"Your delicacy, Emma, shall be in safe keeping as far as my judgment goes. I shall address a few lines to your father, merely to ask his blessing; more I know cannot be given, nor is it desired. I have told Mr. Smith my future plans; and as to little incidental expences, I always keep a hoard sufficient for what our rank in society may require on such an emergency."

"How shall I repay such unexampled, undeviating, and undeserved goodness?"

"By showing me that you are the happy, respectable wife I wish you to be."

We drove on, therefore, rapidly to Hymen's altar. But, swift as was our approach, another pair preceded us: this was Henry Delmont, and the

woman of his heart. I have long seemed to lose sight of him, and during that time he experienced strange and painful vicissitudes, but I was unwilling to break the thread of his narrative or of my own.

I must go back to the period of Mr. James's frequent visits to Orissa Place, previous to my grandmother's illness. They were of the most disinterested, praise-worthy nature; though curiosity suspected, and ill-will affirmed, that they were connected with prospects arising from an apoplectic seizure that happened to the rector of * * *, which living was in the general's gift, and tenable with Ringrove. But, instead of soliciting favours, his purpose was to expostulate with the enamoured dotard on his crime of not making a provision for that son whom he had occasionally

held forth as the heir of his fortune, previous to his entering into a connection which might produce legal issue. On this point Mr. James resolved to employ all the energies of his eloquence, and to denounce with the authority which his sacred function warranted him to use against impenitent offenders, the fault of not employing the mammon of unrighteousness in repairing the consequences of former sins. He also meant, if possible, on worldly considerations, connected with his own comfort and reputation, to dissuade the general from the folly of his projected marriage with Miss Selina Flimsy: but I will give the story in our good vicar's own words.

"We found the general attired like a youthful bridegroom, his thin grey hairs covered with a brown Titus, his yellow cheeks slightly tinged with

rouge, and his figure braced into an attempt at dandy lankness, evidently painful, and ridiculously unsuccessful. He was busily employed in shewing Orissa Place to the family of his intended bride, who did full justice to the beauty of his Hindu gods and stuffed alligators. A less equivocal set never met my observation; and though I have long lived in retirement, I have occasionally been able to take a bird's-eye view of the living world. There was 'my brother the doctor,' and 'my brother the lawyer,' (a quack and a pettifogger,) and 'my sister the brewer's lady,' and 'my sister,' who passed as the widow of a very wealthy man, and in possession of a large jointure, (settlement would have been a more correct word,) besides a group of cousins, whose manners revealed their acquaintance with the mysteries of the

turf and the gaming-table; Doctor Flimsy, Mr. Flimsy, and Mrs. Vandazzle were pressed into the fore-ground; the brewer's lady and those remote in blood occupied back seats. I am convinced they were enjoined not to trespass beyond an acquiescent monosyllable, or an interjection of delight, unless the example of their host, or a significant wink justified an interlocutory oath, or a quip at the parson. They had also been drilled, no doubt, into the use of silver forks, napkins, and finger-glasses; and, for learners, the major part acquitted themselves decently.

"The general was in high spirits. He had never kept good company either in India or in England; for there were many traits in his character which placed barriers that even his immense wealth could not overthrow, between him and the great world; for

that world, though it does not always exclude vice, in the just meaning of the word, is punctilious against lapses from honour. The general's taste, mental and physical, had been formed in the east, and his inordinate love of pepper was not confined to culinary indulgence. The Flimsys rather showered than sprinkled it, and all they bestowed only created an appetite for more.* He found them all, — talkers as well as hearers — very worthy, conversible people; and they found every thing so delightful at Orissa Place, even down to the scraper at the porter's ward, so elegant and beautiful, that they only wished they might live and die there. The scene was rich and ludicrous, but my attention was diverted from what the entertainer and the

* "Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please."
GOLDSMITH.

entertained reciprocally swallowed, by observing my dear Henry's sombre countenance. He sat silent and disregarded at his father's table, where, a month before, he was the chief object. Asked by no one to drink wine, and not daring to call for any, he remained with plate unchanged, and eyes rivetted to the floor, till Dr. Flimsy, who was next him, had the assurance to patronize him, and when the cloth was removed, turned, and with a joyous slap on the knee to rouse attention, said,

" ' I am afraid, sir, you arn't well?'

" ' Sir!' said Henry, starting.

" ' Afraid you arn't well, sir, or perhaps in love?'

" A loud laugh followed. Henry's pale face became scarlet, and even the general did not just then look with benignity on his intended brother.

" ' Doctor, you drink port, I think; pass the port to Dr. Flimsy. All

my Selina's connections, including your wife and family, doctor!'

"'Thank you, general, and I hope this time twelvemonth I may drink your son and heir.'

"The general's face 'grew darker and darker,' as Henry's emotion became more visible.

"'Delmont,' said he, (that name was always used when the whim of the moment pointed to disgrace and banishment) — 'I see your thoughts are in the library, and, as your time in England will be short, let us not trespass on your studies. — A *protégé* of mine, Dr. Flimsy,' as the dejected youth shut the door; 'nay, to own the truth, a consequence of youthful indiscretion, on whom I have bestowed an excellent education, and fitted him out for India, where he may make his way in the world.'

" 'Noble!' 'generous!' 'bravo!' exclaimed the single-worded toadies; the oratorical ones were more florid, especially Mrs. Vandazzle, whose handkerchief was applied to her eyes, being put in requisition by her own maudlin declamation on the general's 'very kind heart.' The doctor, whom I most disliked of the party, in his exordium spoke in praise of my pupil, calling him 'a pretty spoken, well looking, sensible sort of a young man.' But the commendation of Henry was such forbidden ground, that even Dr. Flimsy's obtuse intellects discovered the necessity of retreat. Our host shifted his position, crammed in musulipatam, and, at last, in a fretful tone, hoped he might find him grateful. Had not the guest dexterously launched into a philippic against ingratitude, I question whether a general invitation to

Orissa Park would have been given next morning.

"I waited," continued Mr. James, "to see the whole of this rubbish stowed into their respective chambers, ere I made my designed attack on General Repell, first endeavouring, by some concessions which I knew would be agreeable, to propitiate a candid hearing. But the artifice did not succeed; my looks at dinner taught him to suspect me. He was moody, silent, and often looked at my night candle and at the door. Fearing that he would escape, I came boldly to the point, and said, I found report was true in assigning to his name a place in the list of intended marriages. He tried to awe me with a bow of dignity, and a remark that he believed he was of an age to please himself without sub-

mitting to be catechized for actions thoroughly satisfactory to himself.

"'That reply sir,' said I, 'is conclusive, and precludes the necessity of an appeal, which I was going to make, in behalf of one who you well know to have indelible claims upon you, whatever *new* connexions you may be disposed to form. But as it would be impossible for you to be *satisfied* with your actions, unless the deed I meant to advise were done, I will not, at present, request to know its extent, but will go to Henry, and relieve him from the agony which he now endures, in supposing himself brought into the world — fostered and then deserted; educated to feel the wants of a gentleman, and denied the means of supplying them; in infancy, childhood, and youth, your cherished darling, and in manhood treated as an outcast."

"'Sir,' said the general, liberally resorting to those expletives of oaths which I omit, 'this is —— insolent, impertinent, and, sir, but for your cloth, and my respect for my own house, you would stand a chance, sir, (his voice and his passion rising with every repetition of that appellation,) to be pushed out of doors, and lodged in the stable.'

"'As a compliment, I presume, sir,' with a firm voice, and my arm so raised as to prove that I disregarded passion, and defied violence; 'I perceive you have been studying Swift, and acknowledge the superiority of the hounyhym to the yahoos who surround you. But not to trifle, I say the deed I require *must* have been completed, or you would not *dare* to take that candle and retire to a solitary chamber.'

"'Why, what should hinder me?'

" ' Conscience ! conscience ! '

"The general started, but again found an evasion of my home-thrusts in a burst of passion.

" 'I see, James, who it is that has made Henry Delmont fly in his benefactor's face, and almost break his heart by his ingratitude. It is you, James, yes, it is you. You have taught him disobedience, and deceit, and treachery, and falsehood, and made him league with my servants, till they regarded him more than me, and seem as the master of my house to every body, and oppose my will, James, and force me to the step which I am taking, lest I should be deserted in my old age, and plundered to support his extravagant vices. And it is all your tutoring with your —— goodness and your —— morality, and your —— religion. Yes, James, you know it all. A

kept mistress disgraced one of my family; and you connive at it.' A volley of oaths accompanied every sentence.

"Ladies," continued the vicar, addressing us, "I shall explain all satisfactorily. At present, let my own character be a pledge for the purity of Henry's morals. When his father had cursed himself out of breath, I asked him to adduce instances of the crimes with which he charged him, and I began my inquiries concerning that of disobedience.

"'He dislikes going to India, after the vast expence which I have been put to.'

"'Yet he obeys.'

"'Yes, how does he obey, with his pitiful hang-dog looks, every where making a party against me, though I have been so good to him? Did not I go to India with fewer advantages, and yet I have scraped up a trifle?

Why does he not like to go? I ask that.'

"'He leaves his heart in England.'

"'His heart! What business has he with a heart?'

"'Most *young* men find they have one, though nature, General Repell, may not have troubled you with that organ.'

"'Nor you either, James, thus to insult the feelings of a gentleman.' Passion here spoke in tears.

"'I would rather, sir,' said I, 'trust to the revived impulses of paternal duty, than to care for your own safety. But as the former may be obliterated by more recent, and less creditable impressions, I must point out to you the line of conduct which I shall steadfastly pursue, first premising, that when you placed your son under my roof, you imposed upon me the duty of

being his friend. That bond of friendship his virtues have rendered indelible, and I shall maintain it, if needful, even against yourself. What I require from you is a settlement on your son, sufficient for respectable independence, and calculated to secure him from the necessity of hazarding his life by a residence in India, which, with his delicate constitution, is more than hazard; for his physician has declared, that to him the climate will be fatal. The alternative is my public disclosure of some papers relative to the means by which you gained possession of the unfortunate Miss Delmont, and to the circumstances of her death. I have left them at home in the custody of my wife, sealed, and with appropriate directions.' I raised my voice and added, 'You know their contents, and that

they are sufficient to withdraw the pillow of security from your head.' "

We all looked at each other, while our worthy vicar paused, overwhelmed by his emotions. Not even my grandmother knew the circumstances to which he alluded. All she had heard was, that Henry's mother was an unfortunate, not an abandoned woman, and had paid with her life the forfeiture of her indiscretion. Our eyes asked an explanation, but Mr. James said, that circumstances rendered it very improper; so I am reluctantly forced to leave the history of Louisa Delmont in the same predicament with Mrs. Strictly's early misconduct.

Mr. James resumed his narrative.

" The general started, put his hand to his forehead, and sunk upon the sopha as if he had received a mortal blow. I had no fear for his life, and

thought it would be better to let him suffer a want of the offices of humanity than allow him to experience their soothings, ere contrition prepared him to be worthy of relief. I retired, called Henry to my apartment, and, fastening the door, we passed the night together; I will not say in sleep, for I knew the nature of the man whom I had threatened and defied. I did not burthen Henry's agitated mind with useless exhortation to fortitude, but I took this opportunity to impress upon it the evidences of that consolatory religion which explains why we are tried by afflictions, and the resources it is intended to afford, together with the unspeakable recompence to be conferred on all who, through the comfort of holy hope, patiently endure tribulation. At early dawn I called my servant, who pre-

prepared our horses, and we took the road to London. There I deposited Henry with a confidential friend, making every arrangement for his safety: I certainly had reason to know that his father had formed a project to have him kidnapped, sent on shipboard, and transported to India."

My blood ran cold when Mr. James's suggestion was confirmed by my grandmother's commendation of his friendly care. She declared that she knew the Nabob well enough to believe him capable of that or even of worse actions. I recollected that, during my mania for an establishment, I had once thought it possible that I could accompany this man to the altar. No wonder, therefore, that I shuddered.

"Such, ladies," resumed the vicar, "was the result of a visit to Orissa Place, which, I believe, some of my

neighbours ascribed to another cause. I returned to Ringrove, but not even to my wife did I divulge the place where I had deposited her darling. I merely said he was in safety, and that I hoped things were in train; I believe it was only by my looks, which I am ill skilled to modify, that she discovered I was doubtful of the issue. In about a month after my return home, I received a letter from a man of law (not a Flimsy), informing me, with great flourish, that General Repell had determined to settle the sum of twenty thousand pounds on the young gentleman for whom I expressed so much interest; and that he intended the deed to be executed at the same time with his marriage writings. I signified my acquiescence in the terms proposed, and my resolution to adhere to *my* part of the contract, which his

employer thus virtually acknowledged. Not having time or words to waste, I avoided any reply to such phrases as 'princely generosity,' 'strong stimulant of unacknowledged paternity,' 'feelings of rigid *honour*,' and other well sounding phrases. Many previous transactions with the general convinced me that no dependence could be placed on his word, especially when it indicated an intention of being guided by correct principles. I was too dubious, therefore, of the actual event to relieve Henry's mind of its many cares, even when I heard that his health was sinking under the pressure; lest the reverberating disappointment should quite overwhelm him. I do believe, however, the purpose would have been adhered to; for the deed of gift was begun to be engrossed, and was as forward as

the marriage settlement, when the execution of both was defeated by the intrusion of an imperative, but unwelcome and unexpected summoner. General Repell, after spending a convivial evening, came not forth from his chamber at the usual hour next morning. After some pause, the door was forced, and he was found a corpse. This was the cause of my last speedy departure for Orissa Place."

We had of course heard of the awful event, and begged him to state how he found affairs.

"Luckily," resumed Mr. James, "I arrived before any interested intruder. In the absence of relations I deemed myself authorized to accompany the medical gentleman who had been called in, to search for papers. Our scrutiny was very close, but no will has been discovered."

"And the deed not executed?"

"Ah, poor Henry!" was the general exclamation.

"He is left destitute, unprovided for, without a shilling!"

"Must he then go to India?"

"I trust not. You know we have long looked on him as our adopted son."

This was a little relief to our feelings. But such scanty prospects! the savings of a sparely endowed clergyman! for Mr. James's sense of justice would not permit him to alienate the little hereditary property to which his kindred had a legal claim, and transfer it at the bidding of friendship and affection. I say, such limited views, only amounting to a barren maintenance, to one who had been permitted, if not taught to consider himself master of eastern opulence,

was dreadful. Yet, thought I, he will not starve; he may live quietly and respectably at Ringrove, even when his dear adopting father is no more. I am sure there are none who will change their behaviour because he is no longer heir to the Nabob. But his enthralled affections! ah, there exists the cureless wrong! The poor girl, too! I wonder if their love was mutual? I longed to ask this question, but, looking in Mr. James's face, I saw a wicked glance of sprightly humour peeping out of the corner of his eye, which seemed to say, "ladies, I have put you on a wrong scent; my story is but half told."

"To whom," inquired my grandmother, "does his immense property descend?"

"To his only near relation, the daughter of a sister whom he discarded

on her marrying to displease him, and has never since assisted or noticed. Amelia Pemberton is his heir-at-law, and nearest of kin, therefore she will be the indisputable possessor of all his real and personal effects."

"Is she married? What is her age? Is she of a good disposition? Surely she will be liberal or rather just to Henry?" were the questions which each of us asked. The vicar bowed separately to us all, and provokingly inquired whom he should first answer. The rule in processions was *juniores priores*, so the point must rest between me and Ellen, whose exact ages he insisted on knowing; and afterwards on ascertaining, with equal accuracy, those of Mrs. Loveday and Mrs. Goodenough, who was with us that evening.

I was much provoked at this trifling,

yet its levity relieved my apprehensions. I protested that I was seven months younger than Ellen, and my question was, "Is she married?" Mr. James uttered a solemn "No." Ellen thought her inquiry related to age. "Twenty-two," was the reply. Mrs. Goodenough next put in her claim to be told if he knew any thing of her disposition. "I know her well," answered the vicar; "and can say much in her praise, and nothing to her disadvantage."

My grandmother said hers was rather a remark than a question, it being, "Surely she will be liberal, or rather just, to Henry." Mr. James looked mysterious, and said there were so many different opinions of liberality, that he knew not what to say. I began again, and asked if she was handsome?

"Dear ladies, have mercy on me; and don't subject me to another round of questions. Well, if it goes no further, I must answer, from my especial regard for Miss Herbert, — who, being an engaged lady, cannot have that dread of a rival toast which generally points the inquiries of expectant nymphs in that direction, — no, I can say nothing better than that she is agreeably plain. The girl who counts her portion as it were by hundreds of thousands does not want the attraction of beauty."

"O if she could but see Henry now in his desolate state, and fall in love with him!"

"That," said Mr. James, most gravely shaking his head, yet still, in spite of himself, looking facetious, "is *impossible.*"

"Why?"

"Because love, however potent, exercises no power over the past. She cannot now do what she has already done." Here he laughed outright at the success of his *ruse*. There was a general start from our chairs. We crowded round Mr. James; and, while shaking his hands with unsparing violence, alternately abused him as the most tantalizing being that ever kept a set of anxious women in suspense, and intreated, and conjured him to tell us all he knew.

"Spare my life, and I will tell you all," said he, fanning himself with his hat, and affecting the agonies of suffocation; "you have no right to murder me, if my practical lesson against curiosity did prove a little too strong. Allow me breathing space, and then ——"

We returned to our chairs; tried

to look penitential; protested it was not curiosity, but friendship which stimulated our solicitude, and at last prevailed on him to resume the thread of Henry's narrative.

"It was during the time when, from the General's behaviour, he expected to be acknowledged and endowed as a son, that Henry Delmont first saw Amelia Pemberton. With the prospect of possessing Orissa Park and its appendages, a doubt arose in his mind. I will not deny that it was strengthened by my remarks as to the justice of his title; and on inquiry, he discovered the existence and the situation of its rightful heiress. He found her acting as teacher in a school, where the poverty of her deceased mother sufficed to place her, and which, after this provident act, could do no more. Her father was totally unworthy. He also

was dead; but that was a relief rather than an affliction.

"Henry avowed himself to be her illegitimate cousin; and, shocked at the laborious discomforts of her situation, insisted on devoting, from his then profuse allowance, a sum equal to her support. I was the medium of this proposal, which I believe nothing but my cloth and character would have induced her to accept. I found her a woman of strong sense and great delicacy. Her occupation had been so far propitious to her *debût* in the station which she will now fill, as to inculcate, from necessity, an attention to the graces of manner, and the attractions of female accomplishments. In these particulars she may be said to excel. She would sing the savageness out of a bear, and is an admirable musician; nor will Lady Arbury, my factotum in

elegance, eclipse, by her own gracious dignity, the attractive sweetness of General Repell's heiress. But to return to her story. Knowing that bad man's caprice and versatility, I limited Henry's generosity to Amelia to such a sum as should supply her personal wants, and enable her to continue as a boarder, not as an assistant, in the respectable seminary at which she was placed, and to the superintendant of which she entertained a grateful respect. There Henry often visited her, and I always accompanied him. An attachment on his side soon took place, which I strongly encouraged; for I saw in it the means of throwing the Repell property into the right line, — a scheme strictly correspondent with my almost obsolete notions of right, and which, not regarding the clamour gainst illiberality, I will ever sup-

port, though in this instance personal attachment, and some peculiar circumstances attending his birth, made me strongly advocate Henry's super-induced claims to at least a sufficiency for his support in the style to which he had been educated. Marriage would unite their different claims, and I saw with pleasure that love was forging the preliminary fetters. You see, ladies, the ground on which General Repell formed his infamous accusations; you also perceive how we were watched by spies ever ready to supply food for caprice, and to aggravate irritability into violence. And I trust, also, you have now a full explanation of the reasons for Henry's reserve in the society of young women, and of my reluctance to familiarize him with those fairer faces which might withdraw his eyes from his Amelia."

We bowed, without affecting to disclaim the compliment, knowing that disqualifying speeches are always interpreted as a demand for higher-seasoned panegyric.

"I shall soon come to a close," said the vicar. "All went on well, till the General contracted his son's allowance to a pittance that made it difficult for him to support Amelia; and soon after we heard the painful news of the influence obtained by Selina Flimsy, and learned that she had sufficient art to procure an offer of marriage. I will not, for I cannot, paint the distress of the lovers. Amelia consented to become Henry's wife, and to accompany him to India, solely with the hope of ministering to his health and diminishing his sorrows; though fully aware of the too probable consequences of being left in a distant country, a friendless, unprovided widow.

The interview which (looking at his watch) I believe is at this hour taking place, and the future plans of the lovers, I leave, ladies, to be depicted by your active imaginations; saying, with Mrs. Loveday, 'Surely, she will be generous, or rather just to Henry.'"

It cannot be supposed, that the death of such a man as General Repell could excite any emotion likely to delay a long-projected nuptial arrangement, except awe at the unprepared state in which the deceased was summoned away, and respect for the opinions of the world; but when the disposal of vast wealth is implicated in the contract, Hymen must tolerate the law's delay. Having been for some years extremely wretched, the faithful pair were well disposed to begin to be happy; and soon after the first period of mourning expired, Henry

became the assured master of Orissa Place. The intermediate time was employed in clearing it of all its contaminating rubbish. I speak not merely of its mackaws and monkies, stuffed serpents and crocodiles, tiger-cats and elephants; for the menageries and the museum were preserved in respect to the General's memory, and for the purpose of softening other indispensable changes. The whole household was dismissed: a few were pensioned, because only a very few had neglected that method of providing for their future wants which peculation afforded, and which the not uncommon mixture of avarice and profusion, inquisitorial watchfulness and utter negligence, in the General's versatile character, alternately afforded and denied to the transient favourite and supposed criminal. The expediency that the young couple should

start with a new set of servants, since their habits would be very different, was on all hands acknowledged; and the Flimsy family also walked out, unpitied and unregretted, into ever-during banishment. Not one ever re-entered the mansion after the day of the funeral. Selina, who lost her chance of becoming its mistress from rapaciously contending for a larger jointure than her inamorato was willing to grant, received a letter from the heiress, desiring her to accept a settlement of five hundred a-year, as a mark of her respect to the memory of her late uncle. Judging that their mutual feelings would not render a personal intercourse desirable, she begged to be informed where the first year's allowance (which would be paid in advance) should be deposited, and also where the regular annuity might be transmitted as

it became due. Miss Pemberton received a civil and satisfactory reply; and thus the Flimsys bade "farewell, a long farewell, to all their greatness."

It was Henry's most especial desire that his bride and himself should receive the matrimonial benediction from Mr. James; and as the good vicar was suffering from a periodical attack of gout, the "mountain could not go to Mahomet." Amelia had no objection to plighting her troth in Ringrove church; and Henry wished to receive the blessing in the place where, in the years of his sorrows, he had offered up "the vows of his distress." They came privately: the dispositions of both had taught them to dispense with eclat when it could be avoided. Mr. James was wheeled to church in his Bath chair; and, with the aid of his crutch, hobbled to the altar. Ellen and I were per-

mitted to be present, and were introduced to the bride: I did design to describe her dress, but it was too simple to be particularized, and only admitted the epithets of elegant and plain. Indeed, my attention was immediately transferred to her countenance, and, though her complexion was bad, and her features were not regular, there was such peculiar sweetness in her smile, and intelligence in her bright blue eyes, that I am sure she must have drawn admiration even in the presence of a reigning toast. Never did I see so great a change as a few months' prosperity had made in Mr. Delmont: his pale, thin, drooping figure was now almost changed to the glow and plumpness, and easy confidence of joyous youth. No longer shrinking from observation, and declining to converse, he recognized all his old

friends with the heartiness of good will, and the conscious ease of a polished gentleman. Some even said that he was become very handsome: all owned that he was infinitely agreeable and seemed uncommonly happy. We breakfasted at Mr. James's after the ceremony. My grandmother and Mrs. Goodenough were of the party. The bridegroom expressed a cordial wish to see us at Orissa Place, as soon as they should have returned from their tour. He was seated between me and Ellen; and, in a lower tone, he told us that he hoped we would bring with us companions for himself, being sure Amelia would engross us, since we were so peculiarly fitted to her taste. This remark tinged my cheek with blushes, and filled dear Ellen's eyes with tears. A barouche and four, with two outriders, now drove up. He threw down

a handsome sum to promote village hilarity; received the benediction of the James's with the filial reverence of an actual son; handed his sweetly smiling bride to her carriage; and dashed off in a style suited to their fortune; while the Ringrove bells rang merrily, and the voices of all its inmates followed them with blessings.

CHAP. XVI.

I HAVE now been two years a wife; and, though we have not claimed the flitch at Dunmow, I can, without perjury, repeat the oath, 'that I would not change Richard Smith for fairer or fouler, richer or poorer.' Love with him has mellowed into esteem and confidence; and I feel I cannot be too grateful to one whose first wish is my happiness. I often repeat my grandmother's words, that since fashion is no criterion of moral worth, it cannot decide on what will best promote domestic felicity. How absurd was the prejudice I cherished against the "Vulcan patronymic."

"That which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet."

And as to his bow and manner of walking, I do think they are so congenial to his character, that a change would be disadvantageous. They at least give occasion to so many playful disputes and humorous schoolings, in which he plays the pupil and I the dancing-mistress, that I always rejoice to find him unalterable, and am glad to resume the lectures, which he thoroughly enjoys. Speechifying is not amongst Mr. Smith's accomplishments; yet a friend has kindly told me, that she knows him to have observed to a confidential intimate, that he had lived very comfortably with his sister, but that marriage, in making so large an addition to his happiness, had thoroughly convinced him of the value of a good wife, and enabled him to appreciate her as the greatest blessing which a man can receive.

As to myself, I am, as my grandmother phrased it, such an altered being, compared with what I was when I first came to Ringrove, that I really must commit a little egotism to show my readers my present character. In the first place, I have arrived so near to happiness as to be most perfectly content. I am uniformly cheerful, and no longer tormented by alternate fits of despondency and flightiness. I pique myself on the neatness of my house and gardens, and on the regular manner in which I conduct my family; but I carry neither the air nor the appearance of a mere household drudge. My servants, I am informed, call me a very good mistress; but they report also that I am not an easy one, since I will use my own eyes for every thing. I have such full occupation that time never hangs on my hands: indeed,

as the day always closes with something still to be accomplished, I should like to relieve some martyr of ennui of that time which he esteems his enemy, but which to me is an inestimable commodity. Amidst all my duties, however, I try to avoid becoming a Mrs. Bustle, because my good husband has a particular dislike to the character; I therefore always contrive to have nothing else to do when he proposes a drive or a walk to my grandmother's. We have now a good deal of society at Ringrove; and since I thought it worth my while to attend to them, I find many rational, kind-hearted people. I, too, am become popular, and they are surprised at finding a good neighbour in the fine London lady. The girls are particularly attached to me, as our house is pleasant, and I make an adroit chaperone; but

I have no longer staying guests, nor any confidential friends of that description. My grandmother warned me against such indulgencies, as shoals on which female peace often suffered shipwreck. Many a wife rues having made a fair playful nymph an inmate. A female confidante conducted the imprudent, but most probably innocent Anne Boleyn to the scaffold; and connections of that nature have often, we might almost say constantly, fanned the smothered embers of conjugal disputes into a flame that has destroyed every mound of prudence, every vestige of love. Such was the purport of the last lecture I received in that dear cottage, where my mind was remodelled and endued with the capabilities of happiness.

Previous to my marriage, my father was made acquainted with my engage-

ment, and his consent was solicited. An answer came, by return of post, wishing me happy, with a little flourish about business being just then *bad*, and requiring *all* his capital; but he supposed that Smith, being wealthy, could wait for his death. Farmers were now the only flourishing people, and bore down commerce and manufactures through the preponderance of the country gentlemen. He had some thoughts of turning agriculturist, and would get a few hints when he came to see me. He does visit us during the shooting season; brings his servant, dogs, and horses; bags a vast deal of game, and despatches it per mail to his London connexions. During his stay he appears extremely happy; he tells me I am a lucky girl; calls Smith a good-natured fellow, and bids me not spoil a good husband. Mrs. Her-

bert declined our first invitation: her health, she says, is delicate; her spirits weak; and she fears that the country is damp and cold. We are, on our part, afraid that we could not make a farm-house pleasant to her; so we have never attempted to conquer her scruples. I should have premised that my father is again in business, and living in a degree of style. I really cannot tell how things were managed. I believe English creditors to be a very merciful race; at least, I have heard several other instances in which people have done extremely well after they have been utterly ruined.

The family at Orissa Park are liberal, worthy, and hospitable: they are a blessing to the country. Mr. Delmont's high deference for Mr. James's judgment supplies the want of experience: it secures him from pecu-

lation in the management of his large property, and from having his kind heart abused by unworthy suppliants. Mrs. Delmont is of a retired disposition, but of an extremely amiable character. Early trials have given to her and her husband rather a grave cast of thought: their minds are highly cultivated: their chief pleasures result from literature. They patronise the fine arts; essentially improve, and tastefully decorate, their estate. From these pursuits genius is encouraged, while,

> "Health to himself, and to his infants bread,
> The labourer bears."

Mr. James has introduced them to that true ensample of English nobility, the Arbury family; and the society in which they mix is always of the best kind for morals and respectability.

Miss Lucy Strictly preceded me to the Hymeneal altar. I must so far be a fashionist as to use that indispensable substitute for the old phrase of going to be married. She was led thither by the Rev. Orlando Strain, who, with the hand of a prettyish, sillyish, but good-humoured girl, received on the instant a dowry of twenty-four thousand pounds, not to mention expectancies. She makes him a good wife, that is to say a very tractable one, and I believe thinks that nothing inferior to an archiepiscopal mitre can be a sufficient reward of his merit. Dear, dejected Ellen's fiery indignation revived a little on this occasion, and she gave vent to not a few severe remarks on the adroitness with which the beau missionary had gained a valuable convert. Her sarcasms were so unusally bitter, that my grandmother knew there must

be some cause for them, independent of the difference in their views of religious duty. This led to an account of their interview at what is now *my house.* Ellen narrated all that passed, and concluded by lamenting that religion should be thus degraded by mercenary and splenetic professors.

"No, Ellen," answered my grandmother; "religion, in the estimation of judicious people, remains the same, and suffers no more from the infirmities and extravagancies of those who seek notoriety by aspiring to be distinguished as serious, than learning suffers from the absurdities of pedantry. Who rejects a beautiful becoming fashion, because you see it slatternly assumed by ill-shaped vulgar people? Religion has not eradicated Mrs. Strictly's constitutional faults, — vanity and ill-temper; and whatever turn her mind

had taken, these would have so far preponderated, as to have caused her good to be evil spoken of. Perhaps, had her aim been less high and holy, she would have been still more disagreeable; for I must believe that the perfume of the sanctuary casts an odour on all with which it comes in contact. As to Mr. Strain, it is not for us to determine on his motives: it is sufficient, for the sake of example, to detect the erroneous nature of some of his tenets. He may be actuated by a desire of notoriety, created, perhaps, by the necessity of preaching himself into a maintenance; and in that case, when the point is attained, the exertion will cease. Perhaps he acts from an unripe judgment, and a great warmth of feeling, which, in extemporaneous bursts, hurries him further than he intends. These are the faults

of youth, and time will correct them. It may be that his mind has a natural obliquity, which prevents him from discovering objects clearly and accurately. You see there are many reasons by which we may explain his conduct, without having recourse to the uncharitable imputation of hypocrisy. As to the good fortune which he has achieved, we may say of it, as Falstaff said of rebellion, 'It lay in his way, and he found it.' That is not an uncommon occurrence, and it only proves how apt young girls are to mistake emotion for conviction, and to lose, in admiration of the minister, the improvement intended by his ministry."

We received a compliment of bride-cake, and paid Mrs. Strain her wedding visit. The compliment was returned on my marriage. All passed

off in cool formal civility, such as is often the substitute for cordiality among country neighbours. But time produced a considerable improvement. My grandmother was in the right; and as the stimulant to obtain notoriety was removed, and the enthusiasm of youth gradually subsided, Mr. Strain paused in his career, and only aimed at that quiet respectability which is always awarded to a regular unpretending discharge of acknowledged duties. He now evidently enjoys the good things which his lady's fortune procures; he is sleek and cheerful; has taken out a licence to shoot; and occasionally fills the pulpit for Mr. James, without provoking from my grandmother one unapproving remark on his sermon. We visit about once a quarter; talk of lighter literature; and, though cards are still interdicted, an

indulgence has been granted in favour of chess and backgammon ; but I still observe that Mrs. Strictly either shuts her eyes, or turns her back on the players. Yet, really, now I come to know her better, she is not the very unamiable woman I supposed her to be. There are redeeming points in her character; and amongst these, is her professing a great regard for my grandmother, and her occasionally wondering who it was that told her Mrs. Loveday was only half a Christian, but a whole formalist.

And now, to revert to the history of my dearest Ellen, which continues still a dreary blank, varying only from the whirls of hope and fear, the concomitants of suspense, to the gloom of anticipated despair. As my grandmother predicted — (how happens it that this dear woman is continually right in her

predictions?) — my marriage has operated as a stimulant on her activity, instead of giving her pain. Hers surely is as noble a heart as ever beat in a female bosom. Her ingenuity, her purse, were put in requisition on that occasion; her taste was equally fertile and correct; her assiduity was unwearied; and when she had attired me in my most becoming dress (her own purchase and fabrication), there was a glow of delight on her features at seeing how well I looked, which renewed the image of my once happy cousin; and as she begged me to gratify her by wearing it at the altar, she avoided every allusion to her own clouded prospects, which might cast an ominous shade over the brightness of mine.

Since I have left the cottage she has resumed those domestic habits

which I do now believe she at first relinquished, not so much from her incapacity to continue them, as with a view to make me appear estimable in the eyes of my hesitating lover, and to accustom me to duties which she hoped to see me called upon to fulfil. And she succeeded; for my husband has often told me, that the balance of his affection was decided in my favour by observing the cheerful alacrity with which I performed my household occupations, and thus practically proved that I had attended to my grandmother's interdictions of waste and negligence. The little incident of gathering up the fragments to compose a scrap bonnet, obliterated the bad effects of my Parisian hat, which I had sported, in the full pride of conquest, to eclipse the village belles, and removed his scruples against a town-

educated wife. I assured him that I had no design upon his heart in my humble industry. He replied, he knew it; my manner at the moment convinced him of my ingenuousness; and he characteristically added, my purpose would not have succeeded, for though he might be *conquered*, he had resolved never to be *caught*. But I grow uxorious as well as egotistical. Let me return to Ellen's sorrows.

In all that regards my grandmother's comfort in the promoting the interests of her little school, the welfare of the village poor, and the convenience of her friends and neighbours, we see the same active, diligent, obliging, contriving Ellen Loveday, — lending, cutting out, and seeking to do good in every imaginable way. But in her person there is a change. The

worm of concealed sorrow "preys on her damask cheek;" her health decays with her cheerfulness, but she allows herself no time for tears. Her nights are passed in my grandmother's chamber, whose watchfulness would, she knows, detect, and whose care would interdict, the indulgence of weeping; and during the day all the time she can spare is devoted to Frederic's widowed mother, to whom Ellen dares not disclose her own apprehensions, and sometimes incurs her displeasure, as being inconsiderate and sanguine in projecting schemes which are to be executed when he returns. Months must yet elapse ere the period can arrive at which he bade us expect that blessed event; and Ellen declines so fast, that I almost fear the expecting bridegroom's hopes will be blasted by premature death.

But he returns no more! The dreadful tiding shave arrived while I am writing. The Dreadnought is lost, with all her gallant crew — not one survivor left to tell the tale! Ellen! thou lovely, noble, faithful, widowed maid! how shall I tell thee that thy betrothed husband has perished, though the manner of his fate be unknown? Not even the rocks on which his vessel and thy hopes were wrecked, nor the sea which dashed over his struggling form, engulfing the discoveries of science, chilling the ardent throbs of emulation, and quenching the fires of honourable ambition, will ever be known. No gales will bear his last adieus to thee, dearest mourner; no bird of heaven will tell whether his sufferings were brief or protracted; no human eye will discover his relics.

All that will ever be known is, that he is certainly lost.

" His bright, but brief career is o'er:
" A distant and a desert shore
" Has Frederic's cold remains."

—— Time has enabled me to resume my narrative. The winter had commenced with unusual severity, but still the care of his cattle drew my husband often from home. I was sitting by a clean-swept hearth, expecting his return, making my baby-clothes, and singing like Juliana in " the Honeymoon," whom I fancied I resembled, when he entered, but no longer with the smile of joy and welcome which usually characterized him, after these brief absences. His florid complexion was changed to paleness, and I saw his hand shake as he held the newspaper.

"You have not read this, Emma," said he.

"No, certainly, I never do, since you told me you liked to read the news to me. But speak, for Heaven's sake! I am sure you are ill."

"Well, quite well, my girl: order dinner. All is quite well, only I must set off for London directly."

"For London? Impossible! look at the snow-drifts."

"Ridiculous! Emma, when did I regard weather?"

I saw his eye fixed on a particular passage in the paper, and while he was giving orders to saddle his favourite hunter, I caught a glimpse of the word "Dreadnought." At an earlier period of my life I should have screamed or fainted; but as I had discovered that such ebullition of feeling would not raise me in my husband's opinion, I only

begged him to let me know the worst. Did he fear to trust me? I asked.

He answered, in his kindest tone, "Never; but, my dearest girl, be calm, be patient; remember that all my happiness depends on you, and that you will be wanted to comfort others."

I read as well as my tears would admit, as follows:

"Inverness, January 22nd.——An inhabitant of this place has received a letter, saying, 'No hopes are now entertained of the safety of the Dreadnought. A bottle has been washed on shore on the isle of St. Kilda, containing a scrap of paper, on which is written, in faint characters: 'Dreadnought long-boat. Ship foundered: 15th day. — All perishing.'"

"And now," said my husband, as soon as he saw me raise my eyes and fold my hands in mournful, but quiet

resignation, "I can cheerfully enter upon *my* duties. You see the intelligence is not official; I shall apply at the Admiralty, and know if any credit be given to the report."

"It is all in vain; see here is another statement: 'The underwriters despairing of the safety of the Dreadnought, have agreed to pay the insurance.'"

The dear pertinacious sceptic became more incredulous. He not merely doubted, but denied, on comparing dates, that the underwriters (if underwriters there were, which he much questioned,) could have had *time* to come to such a conclusion. He looked for the account of St. Kilda in the geographical grammar; discovered it was a bold shore, thinly peopled, and difficult of access. How could intelligence from thence reach Inverness? This he would know at the post-office. His friend, Lieutenant Capstern, if he

were at home, could tell him the course of the currents, and inform him what winds had prevailed. In brief, he argued himself into perfect impenetrability; pronounced it a Scotch humbug; and looking at my tristful eyes, heartily wished he had the caning of the author.

"But what motive could the fabricator have, and why is it a Scotch falsehood?"

"Let it be English, then; and indeed I think it has more the air of a cockney invention, — something in the style of the good advice which they give to us farmers. I cannot, Emma, account for the love of humbug, and of dismal stories; but all the world seems fond of being kept in hot water. Emma, do you be a good girl; keep our friends, if possible, at the cottage, ignorant of this tale till I come back. There are not many newspapers taken in at Ringrove,

and this shall not spread it (tossing ours into the fire); quietly transport yourself and your work to the cottage in the pony-chaise, and stay there till I return; have no fears for me; and be assured I will leave you no longer than is necessary to sift out the truth of this report, and to know the opinion entertained by well-informed people respecting Frederic's safety."

His horse being now announced, he expressed a hope that he should be in time to meet the mail-coach at——. We parted, each bound on our respective duties; and, I may truly say, with minds too much engrossed by the interests of others to deserve, from the most cynical observer, the imputation of uxorious weakness. But, ere I reached the Loveday cottage, I discovered that concealment was impracticable: that unaccountable, unac-

knowledged, yet universal pleasure of circulating melancholy tidings, had prompted busy spirits to publish the catastrophe of the Dreadnought, and not even the severity of the season could confine the villagers to their houses. My appearance drew them round me, all eager in inquiries, prompt in condolence, yet each charged with a different tale. "Ah, Madam Smith, are you going down this bad day? Then the Captain is certainly lost!" "Gone to the bottom!" said one. "No, eaten by savages!" "Not so, not so; pined to death!" "I tell you, fools, the ship sticks in the ice!" Mingled with these contradictions, the kind sympathy and strong attachment of esteem and gratitude broke forth in ardent prayers that Heaven would support poor Miss, and be a comfort to the good old ladies.

I drove on to the cottage; the wicket was open; but there was no one to welcome me. I tried to recollect my husband's injunction to be firm, and his warning, that *all his happiness depended on me;* yet my trembling limbs were scarce able to support me to the library, where, in low, tremulous, but distinct tones, I heard the voice of humble prayer. I entered, and saw Ellen senseless, stretched on a sofa before the fire, Bridget and Martha chafing her marble form, and my grandmother kneeling beside her. She saw me enter, and held out her hand: I assisted her to rise, which her infirmity prevented; her venerable head sunk on my shoulder."

"Emma," said she, "I am still a selfish being: I have been praying that this afflicted girl may be restored to life."

"Surely she is not dead!" I exclaimed, throwing myself beside her.

"No, Miss,—Madam, I should say," whispered Bridget. This attention to etiquette tranquillized my fears. "Indeed! indeed, miss Ellen is better, her heart beats stronger; and see, I can bend her fingers. More hot flannels, Martha! The wench is stupid!"

"My dearest love! my own inestimable Ellen!"

She faintly raised her heavy eyelids, and I saw lustre and motion in the blue orbs which they shaded. She uttered my name with a deep sigh. I bent over her to catch the whispers of her sweet voice, while she just articulated, "I shall kill my best friend." My grandmother again sank upon her knees; but supplication was now changed to thankfulness.

"And you, too," resumed Ellen,

casting on me one of those affectionate looks which penetrate the soul.

" Not so, not so ; we are all well, all able to comfort and sustain you. We are ready to do any thing to serve and save our hearts' dear Ellen."

" He is gone, Emma ; his sufferings are over. Oh! dearest grandmamma, do but kiss me, and tell me you will pray for me, and I will not be so impious as to repine. Have I been very wicked? Tell me, what did I say when they first told me? I saw Mrs. Strictly lift up her hands and rush out of the room. Did I blaspheme Providence?"

" My dearest child," said our kind protectress, pressing her hands in the act of benediction on the head of her best-beloved, " you were all meekness, even in the extremity of sorrow, and Mrs. Strictly left the room at my re-

quest, because whenever your eyes rolled towards her your fits increased, and I thought that her presence added to your affliction. The motion you saw was accompanied by a prayer for your restoration; and I believe she felt a degree of self-reproach for having been too abrupt in her communication."

"This, then," said I indignantly, "is another instance of officious intrusion."

"No reproaches, Emma; I will have nothing like invective or complaint of any one uttered now that this dear creature's senses are restored. We must some time or other have heard the dreadful tidings; and now the first shock has been sustained, perhaps a sudden communication was best. Our well-intentioned neighbour meant an act of kindness, and fancied it better

we should hear from her, than read with our own eyes the overwhelming tidings."

"But is there not," said I, "some hope, some faint gleam of comfort? The paragraph that I read suggested to my husband doubts of its authenticity."

"No, no!" said Ellen with energy; "never, if you have any wish to save me, never name hope to me again. Hope and love are passions which I will never more suffer to invade my bosom. For your sakes, inestimable friends, for the sake of my Frederic's most forlorn mother, to whom I will be doubly a daughter, I will endeavour to be resigned; I will even pray and try to live; I will do all you bid me, except hope; but I feel, were I again to indulge the most distant thought that he was alive, my enfeebled frame

could not sustain another shock similar to what I have this day endured."

I assisted to convey the dear mourner to her chamber. The faithful Bridget took her station by the bed-side; and we had soon the comfort of hearing that, exhausted by anguish, she had sunk into a heavy sleep. I had now leisure to recollect my husband's incredulity respecting the authenticity of these fatal tidings; but Ellen had interdicted every suggestion that might lead to hope; and my grandmother was also persuaded that there were no rational grounds to entertain doubts as to the truth of the intelligence, for the fabrication of which no possible motive could be assigned. My own opinion tended to the same conclusion; and I found that Mrs. Strictly, when she announced to them the dreadful paragraph, further ob-

served, that she had private reasons for knowing it to be too true. All brighter prospects thus disappearing, I resolved to bend every faculty of mind and body to the task of consolation; sometimes sending an affectionate sigh and an earnest prayer after my kind-hearted, persevering Richard; admiring his motives, proud of his friendly zeal, but blaming his pertinacity in denying what every one else admitted to be a fact. But I had heard that men in general were very positive.

Ellen rose next morning, calm, sad, and languid. With heart and hand I joined my grandmother in the duty of supporting her in her severe sorrows. Our first care was to occupy her mind. We felt it as a source of comfort that Mrs. Goodenough should now be visiting a distant friend in such

a secluded spot, that she would enjoy some days of happy ignorance respecting her son's fate; and I wrote a letter, by Ellen's dictation, which we calculated would reach her at the same time with the afflicting news, telling her that the widowed maid had survived the shock, and trusted in Heaven for ability to fulfil those sacred claims of filial duty to which she felt solemnly pledged. She insisted on wearing weeds: I did wish her to have postponed the design till Richard's return; but it afforded her occupation, and I assisted in providing them. Unfortunately, the James's were gone to visit the Delmonts; but all our other neighbours flocked in, and echoed our laments. The poor, too, came with their blessings and sympathising tears, repeating anecdotes of Frederic's boyhood, all in-

dicative of a gallant spirit and a kind heart. Ellen was never weary of the theme. Though still feeble and unable to converse, she no longer looked wildly; nay, she sometimes seemed to listen to our discourse, when the subject accorded with her own solemn feelings.

My grandmother was "deeply skilled in sorrow's heavy task," and well knew what would aggravate and what abate its power. She often turned the conversation on early death, and condemned the presumption of questioning Providence when the destroying angel is commissioned to go forth and uproot the thriving lovely plants; while the rugged, mossy, scathed, and blighted cumberers of the ground are permitted to remain unfelled, though they seem only spared

to drop mildew and disease on the rising shoots which they overshadow.

"Such," she said, "must be the nature of a probationary world. The stunted vegetation of the wilderness never can resemble the luxuriant yet uniform fertility of Eden. The tares and the wheat are to remain together till the harvest. The barren tree acts as a foil and also as a stimulant to those that bring forth much fruit; and the irremediable frost of death prematurely blasts the labours and hopes of the husbandman, to remind the volatile that on earth we are only pilgrims, and to convince the sceptic, by the unequal allotments of sublunary blessings, that there is a world where the Lord of eternity fully vindicates his impartiality as the righteous Judge and benevolent Father of the universe.

" Let those, then, who are called to resign the treasures which their souls held most precious, console themselves with remembering that their treasures have been resumed before they were changed into corrections; while the perishable nature of every sublunary good impresses awful considerations on the minds of those who are still rich in social comfort. In regard to the victims of early death, is it indeed a misfortune to die young? Do added years always, or even generally, make people more amiable, estimable, or fit for immortality? This question you, my dear girls, cannot so well answer as myself, because you have not yet watched the process of active benevolence hardening into selfishness, or of ingenuous, docile, agile youth dwindling into crafty, imbecile, querulous, dogmatizing age. Many whom

you now think repulsively disagreeable, I remember to have seen the ornament and delight of society. The beauty and energy of the mind often decay faster than bodily activity or personal charms. What multitudes are there to whom, for their own sakes, for the sake of their friends, their compatriots, their country, we must lament that, 'length of days, — tremendous blessing,' — was granted! Numbers of those who died, in the sanctity of unsullied reputation, in the bloom of their years, and over whom we still breathe the sigh of deep regret, might have found the world an arena perilous for their virtue or their fortitude. I have often surmised that King Edward the Sixth and Lady Jane Grey were of this character; and that the mild and elegant features of their minds were

ill suited to the stormy times in which they lived. It is not likely that they would have been corrupted by licentiousness or goaded into tyranny; but they both proved that they might have been warped by entreaty, and urged to do what their conscience denounced as wicked acts. I allude to Edward's signing the death-warrants of his uncle Somerset, and of the fanatical anabaptists, whom, at the entreaty of Cranmer, he consigned to the stake; and to Lady Jane's assumption of the crown, which she knew was not her right.

"Our ancestors bitterly deplored the death of Henry, the eldest son of James the First. Look at the far harder fate of his surviving brother, and say which had the strongest claim to our tears? Can it be pleaded that the prudent rule of Henry would have

averted the calamities which overwhelmed Charles, and have prevented the British diadem from becoming a crown of thorns? The princes were educated in the same tenets, as respected the divine right of kings. Henry gave early proofs of a high determined spirit, and invincible pertinacity; while the bitterest enemies of our murdered monarch never denied him superior abilities, or elegant taste, and seldom doubted his conscientious intention to act right, though they deprecated the rooted prejudices which clouded his mind, — prejudices, be it remembered, that were also ascribed to Henry.

"The wrong estimate frequently formed of characters that have not yet been called forth, was never more apparent than in that which Edward the Sixth made of Queen Elizabeth, when

he called her 'His sweet sister Temperance.' I mean not to impeach the lion-like qualities of the royal virago, or to dispute the numerous benefits which England derived from her sovereignty; but surely, amongst her virtues, meekness (which was what her brother meant by temperance) could not be enumerated. She was also in youth celebrated for simplicity and plainness in her apparel. I blush to think that, when an old woman, she was alike ridiculous for her love of finery, and of amorous adulation. Had Elizabeth Tudor died young, we should have ranked her with her angel-cousin, Lady Jane, instead of classing her with our Edwards and Henries, the heroes and legislators of Britain, as equally "great in the war, and great in arts of sway."

I here remarked, with a deep sigh,

reflecting on my present full content, and on what might be my future deprivations, that, by this strain of argument, it seemed desirable to die young.

"No," replied my grandmother: "our desire should be to live usefully and watchfully, so long as God sees fit to grant us life; to consider that life as his gift, which must be thankfully received and carefully husbanded; and to bear its concomitant evils patiently till he calls us home. If he foresees trials to which our virtue will prove unequal, snares which our integrity cannot resist, calamities which must befall ourselves or others, should our days be extended; if our virtues are ripe for heaven, — if our sins and offences would only be multiplied by our continuing longer here, — or even our removal in all the prime and freshness of youth will operate as a

warning on the thoughtless, and appal the daring sinner; — He who giveth immortality is not capricious or cruel, but wise and merciful, when he determines our appointed task to be finished. And let us ever remember, when we deplore the sudden breach of ties which promised to be enduring, — when we witness the eclipse of a sun beautiful in morning brightness, or glorious in meridian pomp, — that our regrets are bestowed not only on a mortal, but on a fallible creature, born to suffer disease, sorrow, possibly shame, poverty, neglect, decrepitude, the privations and the weariness of age, from all which early death has preserved him. A sacred seal is placed upon his memory. He can no longer excite terror or anguish in the bosoms of friends by his errors or injuries; and as to his enemies, I will not merely

say that these can no longer have cause for triumph, or opportunity for oppression; for I am more apt to attribute the counteraction which we often meet with in life to selfishness than to ill-will, and rather ascribe it to the desire of advancement, than to the truly base delight of pulling others back. But as I cannot deny that simple uncompounded malice and hatred may exist, it is consolatory to think that these passions, like the object on which they were exercised, are mortal, and very rarely pursue their victim to death, or couch upon his grave. In most hearts conscience at that time stirs up a busy strife; and when he who was detested in life is gone to his account, recollects that now all are amenable to the same audit, and inquires if he be not gone before as an accusing witness.

"Such, dearest Ellen, were the reflections which helped to heal my sick heart, when pierced with arrows, shall I say, sharp as those which now rankle in yours? I might say so, but for one circumstance. —I have lost most dear, most truly valuable children. The acute sensibility of mothers at such privations can only be conceived by mothers. There is one evidence that it is more poignant, because it is generally more *lasting* than the grief excited by the broken ties of plighted love. Furthermore, it is irreparable. The bonds of affection are often renewed, and the widowed heart finds another partner; but the Lamb of God does not now walk the earth, and attest his divinity by restoring a dead son to a bereaved mother.

"O!" said Ellen, falling on her knees, and bathing my grandmother's

hand with tears, "cannot I supply the the place of my father?"

"Dear, affectionate girl, yes, in many things you can; but his was a firm mind, and he had courage to protect and judgment to guide me through many difficulties in which female fragility and unaptness for business need assistance. I know, Ellen, you will do all you can; nature must assert her sacred rights, and you have felt as heavy a blow as can fall on a susceptible heart. In your case there is a terrible space for fancy to fill; and, unless you curb her imaginings, she will body forth innumerable miseries, *all* of which are impossible, the major part unlikely. But in time these images will, either by familiarity, become less appalling, or other thoughts will dispossess them; and, though bright visions never may return, your

mind will sink into the placid calm of resignation. To expedite this change, reflect, I beseech you, that the world has no dell nor cavern, no rock or desolate strand, where your Frederic could be cast unobserved by the eye of God. Rest assured that when all human aid is distant, religion affords consolations incomparably superior. Scripture assures us of this, and the narratives of those who have survived the most imminent dangers and privations, confirm the promises of the divine word. Multitudes of instances might be given; but I refer you more particularly to what is stated by Selkirk, Bligh, Fellowes, and Franklin; for in these instances the serenity inspired by confidence in God's protection was wonderful.

"You ask me," continued the consoling monitress, "if you can supply

your father's place? Dear child, you have supplied it, for it was you who first reconciled me to my loss. At first I thought I should never more have known what hope was; but you were brought to me a feeble infant, and hope revived. Your wants required my exertions, and compelled me to be employed. This was a great point gained: I became amused, consoled, resigned, contented. Hope revived,—the hope of seeing you amiable, and making you happy.

"I shall not talk to you, Ellen, as if I thought the man existed who could ever supply Frederic's place to you. No, I feel that the uncertainty of his fate binds you to him with indissoluble ties; but, in time, you will consider that the removal of the elm to which you clung has not depopulated the forest. All social claims and du-

ties are not abrogated by his death. Think, moreover, that, even in the happiest part of our lives, recollection will tell us that our most delightful sensations proceeded from hope, that emanation of a brighter world to which it acts as a cynosure. Had your lover been spared, even he could not have erected a sublunary paradise, and enshrined you in it. He could only have religiously adhered to his promise of endeavouring to secure you from avoidable misfortunes, and of assisting you to sustain what must be borne. The common lot of humanity would have befallen you. Suppose that your union had long continued, you must then have grown old. There is a depressed feeling annexed to this which none but the aged know; a clinging to present comforts, — call them health, strength, or activity, —

our bodily senses or the powers of our minds, — blended with an expectation of speedy privation, — a watching of decay, — and a recollection of what we have been. A friend has depicted this at a time when she felt the approach of what she personifies. Emma, open my writing-table; you will find an Address to Time among my papers, and have the kindness to read it to us."

TIME.

Name me the spectre who appals
The faint resolves of trembling age,
Whose length'ning shadow darkly falls
On glory's goal and wisdom's page.

Invincible his arm; his eye
Is awful, pitiless, austere;
Slow his approach; but when past by,
His wings of "eagle speed appear."

An hour-glass and a scythe! — 'Tis Time!
Who now a different mien assumes,
From the gay vision of thy prime,
Like zephyr trick'd with rainbow plumes.

How smiled the idler then! How smooth
His dimpled cheek! his eye how bright!
Speeding the rainbow-course of youth
Down the green valley of delight!

Then grateful as the vernal bird
Was the lone cricket's wintry cry;
The wasting tempest howl'd unheard,
While the spiced goblet mantled high.

Midst festal sport, the agile dance,
The choral strain, the hunter's horn,
Warm fancy, with bewitching glance,
Kindled the hopes of years unborn:

For while on beauty's melting eyes
The lover gazed, that sibyl sung
Of dearer claims, of holier ties,
And charms for ever fair and young.

Such *were* thy days: — they quickly past;
But how could pleasure wish their stay,
When ev'ry radiant evening cast
Its freshness on the coming day?

But now, albeit the present tires,
Like sailors floating on a mast,
We clasp the wreck of our desires,
And from the future shrink aghast.

To-day 'tis apathy or pain,
The failing limb, the lab'ring breath;
But the sad morrow may contain
Sorrow, or agony, or death.

"A lying sister" now no more,
It narrows a contracted span;
Confirms the weakness we deplore,
And steals another staff from man;

Tears from our soul some aged friend,
Or dims that beam of youthful prime,
Which seem'd our prospects to extend,
And light us o'er the gulf of time.

How long the solitary hour,
Regretting what it still retains!
How cold the hearth, how sad the bow'r,
Where silence or oblivion reigns!

Where'er we look, a vista leads
To one dark house our certain way;
Where'er we turn, a herald speeds
With sure denouncement of decay.

Can skill elude, can courage brave
The certain issue of this strife?
Where is our refuge? — 'Tis the grave,
That cradle of immortal life!

There, from its base exuviæ torn,
Slowly matures the ethereal germ;
Compatriot with the sons of morn,
It scorns the ravage of the worm.

Avenging witness! Judge severe!
Though angels at thy birth-day sung,
All-conquering Time, yet man shall hear
The dirge of thy destruction rung.

When ruin's burning ploughshares drive
O'er the crush'd wreck of thy domain,
" Thy ransom'd pris'ners shall revive,
In thy great Sire's immortal reign." *

As I read the concluding stanzas, my grandmother's countenance glowed, and Ellen quietly wept. Her thoughts never strayed from Frederic, though they sometimes varied from one regret to another; and she now told us that the most insupportable part of her grief proceeded from self-reproach. We begged her to explain. She had never, she said, warned him of his danger, nor used *her* influence to detach him from this dangerous undertaking.

" Tell me, Ellen, were you aware of its perilous nature? Did he ex-

* These stanzas were printed, some years since, in a periodical work. A reader acquainted with Young's Night Thoughts will trace his imagery in the passages that have marks of quotation.

plain to you its extreme hazard, and bid you balance that against the glory of the achievement, and the splendour of its reward?"

"Never! never! He silenced my inquiries as to the risk; and, as he did not talk of the recompense, it never crossed my mind any further than that I knew fame would be the deserved result."

"And how did he silence your inquiries?"

"By saying that duty was imperative."

"From whence, then, proceeds your self-reproach? Have *you* clearer views of what duty required?"

"I might have gained from others more particulars; I might have read, reflected, and ——"

"Deterred Frederick Goodenough, a brave officer, from doing what, as

he affirmed, *imperative duty* called him to do." Ellen hung her head, and conscious shame flushed her face.

"And could you," resumed my grandmother, "after this have expected him to be happy, especially if some firmer spirits accomplished what he had shrunk from, after having solicited the appointment, and bound himself to the task? Further, could he continue to esteem the weak-minded woman who had not only deprived him of glory, but stamped a stigma on his name? And when has wedded love survived esteem? No, my child; believe me, your present lot is more eligible, linked as you are with the memory of one who nobly perished in the search which science and philanthropy pointed out as congenial to the maritime supremacy of England, than it would have been had he lived

an inglorious and discontented, because, in his own estimation, a dishonoured man, whose name was expunged from the imperishable list of native worthies which have made Britain the guard and envy of the world.

" It is, perhaps, ridiculous in an old woman to affect the patriot; but I am only talking to my dear girls, when I say this feeble frame glows with as pure and as ardent a love for my country, entertains as warm wishes for her continued prosperity, feels as jealous of her honour and as proudly conscious of her pre-eminence, as any of those men might who, under God, have been the means of elevating her to her present greatness. In this one point I am free from the predominant partiality of old people for the times in which they were busy actors. I acknowledge in the present days a

great tendency to moral as well as mental improvement. I have known the foundations of religion, virtue, and social order, appear to tremble under the unawed, violent, avowed attacks of sophists, who, though their assertions accorded with the axioms which made

'Black not so black, nor white so very white,'

yet persuaded the multitude to call evil good and good evil. And amongst this multitude were ranked not merely the base, the desperate, and the ignorant, but persons who had unquestioned claims to talent, information, wealth, and rank. It is consistent with the character of our sex to shudder at the devastations of war, and our religion leads us to look to other means of spreading the empire of the Prince of Peace, than 'battles of the warriors, with confused noise

and garments rolled in blood;' yet must we acknowledge that the glorious triumph of reason, law, and religion, which I have lived to see, was preceded by the triumphs of the sword. And since Britain has consecrated her victories, by fixing their trophies before the seat of justice, and her memorials in the sanctuary; since her gallant sons have, in every clime, upheld by their conduct as men the fame they acquired as warriors; I daily bless God that I was born in this age and nation, and frequently apostrophise my country in the words of Thomson:—

" ' Bold, firm, and graceful, are thy generous youth,
By hardship sinew'd, and by danger fir'd,
Scattering the nations where they go; and first
Or on the listed plain, or stormy seas.
Mild are thy glories too, as o'er the plans
Of thriving peace thy thoughtful sires preside;
In genius, and substantial learning, high;
For every virtue, every worth, renown'd;

Sincere, plain-hearted, hospitable, kind;
Yet like the mustering thunder, when provok'd,
The dread of tyrants, and the sole resource
Of those that under grim oppression groan.'

"Be of good comfort, then, my Ellen: the undegraded name of Frederic Goodenough ranks with the genuine sons of England!"

CHAP. XVII.

I PASSED ten days at the cottage. Richard was a punctual correspondent; but, as I am rather proud than vain of my husband, I shall not fill my pages with his letters, though they might be adduced as models of the laconic style;

" —— clear, succinct, and full, without a fault;
Speaking no more than just the thing they ought."

Without any hidden meanings, equivocal expression designed to mislead, or that effervescence of sentiment, which, under the name of "moonshine," he heartily detested. A postscript was invariably added, repeating his disbelief in the Inverness story; but in his last letter there was this variation: "We now *know* the bottle

story to be a hoax: I shall soon be at home."

I could not show these letters to Ellen, as we had not dared to interrupt the calm of her settled sorrow by naming the motive of my husband's absence; but my grandmother was my confidant, and, though at first convinced of the Dreadnought's wreck, she gradually leaned to the contrary opinion, and I went by her desire to the manor-house to inquire of Mrs. Strictly how she acquired the *certain information* that the fatal intelligence was true. The good lady spoke very authoritatively; but, exclusive of a sort of supernatural intelligence communicated by dreams, omens, prognostics, and a conviction that vain must be the result of all presumptuous attempts to defy Providence, I could gain no exterior corroboration, except that a

yellow admiral's lady, with whom she became very intimate at Bath, a most charitable, superior woman, told her that all her friends in the navy said nothing could come of it; for Sir Tackwell Portlove always shook his head when the expedition was named, and said, "Phoo! fools! madcaps! not a soul of them will ever see England again."

I was endeavouring to repeat this *certain information*, with the tone and manner of the informant, as I returned to the cottage, hoping thereby to restore a long-banished smile to the face of the honoured mistress, when I perceived myself to be pursued by a man wrapped in a long coat and a fur travelling cap. I saw that it was not my husband: it grew dusk: I felt alarmed, and quickened my pace, when he arrested me with a loud halloo,

"Miss Herbert! Cousin Emma!" I turned round, and saw, merciful heaven!—Frederic Goodenough!

Never was I less disposed to credit supernatural visitations; but a thrill of horror shot through my veins, as if the unfathomable deep had cast up its victim before me. I must have fallen, had I not been supported by a powerful and a living arm. The only words my gasping breath allowed me to articulate were, "Are *you* alive?" while he, equally petrified by my consternation, and by the mourning dress which, to gratify poor Ellen, I had assumed, conjured me, in agonising suspense, for mercy's sake to answer, as he alternately inquired after his beloved, his most precious Ellen, and Mrs. Loveday.

"Alive! alive! O Frederic, Frederic, it is for *you* we mourn!"

My tears now flowed fast, and the

gallant sailor's mingled with mine. How truly is weeping styled "kind nature's soft relief." We soon began to converse in broken sentences. At length I explained to him the origin of our alarm. An angry imprecation escaped him as he ascribed the intelligence in the sealed bottle to one of his shipmates who had been jilted by an Inverness coquette, and whose vanity suggested that, though she had refused, she really loved him. All the voyage home he was contriving divers ways of mortifying her, and he doubted not but this was what he fixed upon; as, contrary to the captain's injunctions, he had been seen to give a letter to a fishing smack that passed them while they were beating about on the north-east coast of Scotland, unable to make port. But, bad as he thought of his comrade's heart and understanding,

he did believe that his sole design was to excite the anguish of one who had used him ill, and not to propagate a falsehood that should obtain public circulation before they anchored in some English port and disproved the intelligence."

"The Dreadnought, then," said I, "is not lost, nor have her gallant crew perished."

All safe, he told me, — not a life lost; and the good ship was brought into Yarmouth roads three days ago. He added that, as an especial favour, (though we afterwards found it was as a reward for service,) he had been immediately indulged with leave of absence to visit his friends. Finding that his mother was not at home, he had come away without making further inquiries, or asking why the servant

shrieked when she saw him, and directed his steps to Mrs. Loveday's.

"O," said I, "what floods of sorrow would have been spared us, could we but have known that all our grief proceeded from the revengeful device of a malicious coxcomb. We once thought that Ellen would have sunk under the blow."

"And she is still grieving while we loiter," said Frederic, giving me his arm. Sudden transitions of the passions were, in her weak state, to be avoided. He could not see her without some preparation, which I hoped my woman's wit could manage. But how to dispose of him while I manœuvred? I proposed that he should go to my house: he stared, but did not ask for an explanation, and I forgot to announce my *establishment*. I then mentioned his own; then the manor-

house; lastly, the vicarage. This was preferred as nearest to my grandmother's, and he could be the sooner summoned; but he craved leave to stand for a minute under the library window, that he might catch the sound of Ellen's voice; and, it being dark, I assented.

I entered in such buoyant spirits that my grandmother congratulated me on Mr. Smith's return: I answered, he was not returned; but I had met with very pleasant company. I rattled on for some time, till I saw Ellen fix her eyes on me in astonishment, then, wiping away a tear, return them to the broad hem which she was folding on a muslin coiffure.

"I must," said I, "entreat you to be less industrious. I predict we shall have a cheerful evening if you will allow me to go on with my stories."

"Certainly, if my grandmother pleases."

"Go on, Emma; I like to see you again yourself; and if we send you home spoiled as a companion, you will never be lent to us again, and what shall we do without you?"

"Perhaps have a visit from some one still more welcome."

Ellen shook her head mournfully, or shall I say reprovingly, but still kindly. My grandmother laid down her knitting, and seemed all anxious attention.

"Well, then, I must go back to the manor house. Amongst much that I heard about omens, visions, impressions, Bath gossip, and things not worth repeating (and I looked significantly at my venerable auditor), Mr. Strain deeply interested me by narrating the *manner* in which Admiral

Byron returned to his family. You know he was believed to be lost in the Wager, one of Anson's squadron, and was actually wrecked on the most desolate part of the South American coast."

"*Lost! wrecked!*" said Ellen in a tremulous voice; "those are soul-harrowing words."

"But he was not lost, dearest love. I am not needlessly harassing your feelings. I am talking of Admiral Byron's *return* after years of absence, after every thought of his safety was abandoned. It is what really happened. I am not telling you a fable, but an instance of a most wonderful preservation through dangers and sufferings almost unequalled. He arrived at his sister's house. She and her family were in mourning. He was in rags, worn with toil, emaciated with

disease. He was even at first disowned. But when she had recognised him — fed, clothed, cherished him, do think of her transports!"

Ellen trembled violently, and at last exclaimed, "But she was only his sister."

Encouraged by my grandmother's looks to proceed, I added, "After such encouragement to banish despair, ought you, my good religious cousin, to interdict hope? Here the loss of the ship was certain; but many falsehoods now creep into newspapers. I would I were quite certain of your bodily strength, of your strength of mind."

A bright glow lighted up her face as she exclaimed, "Quick! quick! what would you say?"

"That there is certain intelligence of Frederic's safety!" She flew into

my arms. "The ship has not been wrecked! Can you bear that I should go on?"

"Yes! yes! Where is he?"

"In England: may I still proceed?"

"I am divinely supported," said she. "Emma, tell me; have you seen him?"

"Yes, and so will you. He is the welcome guest I predicted." Need I add that the fond listener rushed in at this moment, and received from my arms the scarce-conscious burthen which he clasped in his own; while I rushed into my grandmother's fond embrace? The cry of joy was louder than the tones which grief had strength to raise? By a spontaneous impulse, we all sank on our knees, and never did the homage of gratitude ascend in more perfect unison, or from hearts more deeply affected with a sense of unspeak-

able mercies. There was an addition to our group, at first unperceived. Bridget, seeing something particularly significant in my looks when she let me in, used the privilege of an old servant, to station herself at the door, and also to open it to the impatient Frederic, whom she detected lurking in the garden. Perhaps her boldness has added something to her life, certainly much to her consequence, by enabling her to boast to her crony gossips that she was shaking hands with the captain's living self, while foolish Martha ran away, thinking it was his ghost.

We had scarce become sufficiently tranquillised for conversation, when we heard a chaise stop at the gate, and saw Richard lead in Mrs. Goodenough. Joyous embraces and inquiries were then renewed. Our social circle was now complete; our measure of joy full.

It became highly proper to acquaint Frederic with my marriage; and the old friends were introduced to each other as kinsmen. I found that the former had continued indefatigable in his researches, till an express arrived at the Admiralty, which happily obviated the necessity of further inquiry. He immediately determined on travelling post; diverged a little from the road to take up the anxious mother, whom he found happily preserved from knowing our distress; and, travelling with extraordinary speed, they arrived in time to share the first burst of our transports. I have often thought that our countenances on this evening would have been a fine study for a painter: I should have been the most ridiculous figure in the group; for I laughed and wept alternately, and continued talking, without knowing what

I said. Ellen's face bore some resemblance in lustre to the moon bursting through clouds, soft, pensive, lovely; but every trace of joy tinged with the shades of retreating sorrow. Frederic saw and heard only his sable-robed charmer, whose faded beauties his grateful eyes seemed to devour with adoration rather than love. As for my husband, he was quite beside himself; obstreperous, egotistical, vociferous, important, without a single trait of his natural character; talking of the great men whom he had persecuted with his opinions, and of the clever men who agreed with him; calling on me to vouch that he no more credited the bottle news than he did the bottle conjuror; again shaking Frederic's hand, saluting Ellen, and wishing her joy; rubbing his knees; wondering if Bridget stopped

to eat the supper, as well as to cook it; and execrating the half-witted fool for contriving a hoax which was near killing two such girls as his wife and Ellen Loveday.

But my grandmother's features had a sublime expression, for they bore the stamp of that pure benevolence which satisfies its desires with beholding the happiness of those it loves. Imagine an angel despatched from heaven to be present at a scene of sublunary bliss, and preparing to return with an unaccusing report to its celestial Lord. So sanctified, so calm, so affectionate, did she sit amongst us, the witness, rather than the partaker, of our transports; for she was musing on him with whom her heart once partook of the livelier emotions which now actuated ours; and anticipating, in humble hope, a reunion above.

"Yes," said she to me, after she had given Ellen's hand to Frederic at the altar, "my duties now seem all terminated. Yet, believe me, I retire in charity with the world; for I rise from the feast of life satisfied, and vacate my place for a younger guest, without envious regret. Still if more days be allotted to me, and undeveloped calls be made on my future exertions, join your prayers to mine, that neither selfishness, caprice, nor misanthropy may contract the heart, warp the mind, or destroy the tranquillity of your grandmother."

THE END.

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